

Book Reviews

Once To Every Man: A memoir, by WILLIAM SLOANE COFFIN, JR. New York: Atheneum 1977. 344 pp. \$12.95

Reviewed by Charles J. Scalise, Campus Minister, Yale University.

William Sloane Coffin, Jr., has become a symbol of the turbulent decade of the 60's on college and university campuses in the United States. In **Once to Every Man** the former chaplain of Yale University and current pastor of New York's Riverside Church chronicles his odyssey—from studying piano to Freedom Riding, from working for the C.I.A. to protesting against the Vietnam War.

Coffin is a public person. Thus his book reads more like a narration of the events of the time than an introspective memoir. (This observation has not escaped the attention of many of the book's most vocal critics!) The exterior struggles are far more visible than the interior ones. The reader learns much more of the "what" than the "why" of the author's life and ministry. There are glimpses, however, of the personal cost of his public discipleship—the loss of intimacy, the tragedy of divorce.

The book is held together by the strength of Coffin's personality and the world-wide diversity of his ministry. It is the breadth and energy of his commitment, rather than the depth and clarity of his analysis, that impress the reader.

Also, Coffin's "lover's quarrel" relationship with Yale provides a model of prophetic campus ministry, which courageously yet thoughtfully addresses the issues of the day from the perspective of the Christian faith. Although one may choose not to imitate his "lone ranger" style, Coffin's unflagging zeal in creatively wrestling with the "principalities and powers" provides an inspiring example reminiscent of II Cor. 4:8-10. In addition, the author's call to global citizenship is not without affinity to the New Testament affirmation of the universal providence of God (Matt. 5:44-45; Acts 17:24-27).

This book is valuable for Southern Baptist campus ministers because of

the alternative vision of college and university ministry which Coffin's life provides us. We as Southern Baptists have much to learn about the social action implications of the gospel (i.e., being "doers of the word") from others whose theology and politics may differ markedly from our own. The book also offers a valuable recounting and reliving of critical events in the history of American higher education from the perspective of a controversial insider. Coffin's commitment to struggling with the moral implications of the Christian faith in the complex arena of secular college and university life should challenge each of us to be "no hearer that forgets but a doer that acts."

Once To Every Man: A Memoir, by WILLIAM SLOANE COFFIN, JR. New York: Atheneum 1977. 344 pp. \$12.95

Reviewed by Bobby Waddail, Campus Minister, Towson State University, Maryland.

Intense! That is the only word that describes William Sloane Coffin, Jr. Whether pianist or prophet, his vibrant intensity just flows.

Once To Every Man: A Memoir chronicles the first half century of that flow, one that filled many streams. Born into a wealthy family, his father committed suicide during the depression. Gifted in many areas, Coffin pursued athletics and a concert pianist career. Intelligent and fluent in languages, he served as an intelligence officer, replacement troops trainer, Russian liaison officer, and C.I.A. agent during and after W.W. II. Idealistic and committed, he entered seminary, first at Union, then at Yale. Administratively talented, Coffin led a Crossroads Africa group to Guinea and organized the Peace Corps training camp in Puerto Rico. Coffin's life reminds one of a Renaissance man. His book is engaging, entertaining, and a history of our times in vignettes.

While Chaplain at Yale University for nearly two decades, Coffin gained national recognition, including being

the real life model for a **Doonesbury** character. His efforts in the Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam War movements brought him into the public view. Much of the book deals with those and the other issues of conscience that were Coffin's causes of commitment. The book has little introspection although it does discuss his two divorces. Ending before Coffin became pastor of the Riverside Church in New York City, the book describes, often through anecdotes, his public life.

Although Coffin's experience in campus ministry as chaplain at Yale differed vastly from that of most Southern Baptist campus ministers, we still may gain insight from the book. Coffin's local and national forum, Sunday morning worship at Battel Chapel and Yale University respectively, contrast with what most of us have available. His socio-economic background and pre-Yale experiences put him in touch with a wide range of influential people; contacts he used frequently in his ministry. Having no direct responsibility to any institution beyond Yale significantly altered the political realities of his position as compared to most Southern Baptist campus ministers. In addition, his parish was made up of some of the intellectual cream of American higher education. Yet much of Coffin's campus ministry reflected his own personality and priorities, a characteristic most of us share with him. Several experiences in the book also reflect the common happenings of campus ministry—individual counseling, Bible studies, and student growth. Thus, we may learn and reflect on our ministry in reading about Coffin's.

In a recent speech, Duke McCall, President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, requested Southern Baptist campus ministers to keep our denomination and churches informed of the societal trends in thought that frequently appear first on the campus—to act out a weather vane and social conscience role. Coffin clearly did that for American society, although not for a particular denomination. I doubt if a Southern Baptist campus minister can play such a role for our denomination and keep his or her job. Too many instances have shown

otherwise. Perhaps Coffin's campus ministry demonstrates how unprophetic and, at points, unbiblical is our own. The scary question is, "Can it be otherwise?"

Two of Coffin's encounters with students seem particularly insightful. While a student himself, he told a group of fundamentalist students who were continually witnessing to him to leave him alone. "At that, one of them said, 'All right, Bill, but you will always be on our prayer list.' The sweetness with which he said it so thinly veiled his hostility that I couldn't help answering, 'And how does your prayer list differ from your shit list?'" (p. 82) How often and how well have we dealt with the same situation?

The other encounter involved ten, mostly southern, Yale students who wrote a letter to the Yale Daily News protesting Coffin's interference as a Freedom Rider in Southern affairs and calling for his resignation as chaplain. Coffin invited them over for "an evening of Bible study." After a while Coffin invited a black law student from South Carolina who was living with his family to participate. She told of the daily humiliations she and her family endured from racism. Coffin said the group's feelings visibly shifted and concluded, "No matter how politically conservative, they were far too decent to want to conserve these aspects of American life. Actually by the time we said good night (and by then there wasn't much of the night left) I had the strong feeling that these students were fundamentally more compassionate than many others politically more liberal." (p. 167) The encounter seems typical of Coffin's campus ministry. May we be as vital.

The Defense of the Gospel in the New Testament, by F. F. BRUCE, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1977. 107 pp. \$2.95

Reviewed by Don Coleman, Campus Minister, Sam Houston State University, Texas.

To the Gentiles in the first Christian century the Gospel of Jesus Christ

was foolish, offensive, and indefensible. The Apostle Paul wrote, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness..."

In this book Dr. Bruce presents a "Christian apologetic" employed by the early Christians to defend their faith in Jesus Christ. He also shows how we, presently, can commend Jesus as the Savior of the World.

The seven brief chapters define the gospel and discuss the confrontations most prominent in the first Christian century. The Jews denied the gospel, the Romans tried to destroy it, and paganism was ignorant of it. One of the chapters is devoted to four radical deviations that tended to rob the gospel of its character and effectiveness. These four, legalism, ascetic gnosticism, antinomian gnosticism, and docetism, had to be exposed, and were exposed for what they were, by the New Testament writers. With the problem in mind, these writers presented to the people "the gospel in all its fullness and depth" as their defense.

The author presents a clear picture of prevailing attitudes toward the gospel of Jesus Christ. Since the Gospel was cradled in Judaism, a most unfortunate cradle, it was hated. Therefore it was necessary to defend it to the fullest. To the early disciples the object must always be to commend the Savior to others. If, in our present time, we are inclined to forget the reason for apologetics where we live and work, Dr. Bruce's book will remind us and refresh our memories.

An overview of the earliest Christian apologists, the book takes a glimpse at their writings and shows how they battled the heresies of their day.

The Defense of the Gospel in the New Testament is a valuable tool in evangelism and Christian discipleship training.

Passages, Predictable Crisis of Adult Life, by GAIL SHEEHY. New York: Bantam Book and E. P. Dutton and Company 1976. 514 pp. \$2.50

Reviewed by Robert Storrs, Campus

Minister, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins.

Do you need a change? Are you looking for another campus or perhaps considering an altogether different vocation? Are you just beginning your ministry and still trying to sort out your role and to stabilize your marriage? Do you feel that time for accomplishing all you had planned is running out? Have you begun to notice the ages of the people in the obituary column? These kinds of questions are keys to different developmental stages, crises in the adult life that Gail Sheehy calls passages.

This book fills in the gap between childhood and senescence. Youth and old age are easily observed because our society has institutions—schools and retirement homes—that enable us to study these ages in groups, to note patterns in development. Life patterns of ages 18-65, however, have not been easily observed because of the vast expanse of vocations and the individual privacy of the people of this age group. This book is not just a developmental psychology book, examining adulthood through unresolved childhood stages. Its perspective is new. The author views adults as adults, experiencing predictable changes that occur in vocation, marriage, philosophy, and ethics.

The value of the book to the reader is that it provides needed objectivity into life's problems. The reader learns that many frustrations for which he "blames" his mate, his job, his boss, or society, are actually from within himself, another stage of his own development, a part of his maturing process. The positive aspect of this book is the fact that the crises, or problems, in each passage are viewed as helps toward healthy growth.

In campus ministry, much time is spent preparing students for life outside an institutional setting. In many cases the campus is the first lab experience for a student before he is completely on his own. As the reader notes these stages in the lives of the students he ministers to, perhaps he can help the students gain some objectivity in many of their emotional decisions. For example, recognition

of the "desire to merge" as a part of the student's development process can help him be more objective in selecting a mate, rather than yielding to the desire to marry by marrying whoever is available.

The author deals shallowly with religion. The reader must be creative in applying the gospel to each passage as a plus for growth.

You will find *PASSAGES* challenging and well-illustrated with stories from lives of real people. Check it out.

Fasting Changed My Life, by ANDY ANDERSON. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press 1977. \$2.25

Reviewed by Jim Brokenbaker, Campus Minister, Wayland Baptist College, Plainview, Texas.

Southern Baptists' man of ACTION and author of *Where the ACTION Is* has not turned to the topic of inaction. Writing the foreword, Jack Taylor says, "We have needed someone as a 'trailblazer' in this area." The book was born out of certain questions of the author which I coincidentally have asked myself recently—hence the review of this particular book. The questions are as follows:

Why was it I had to revert to the last generation of Christians to find fast-ers? Are there no modern leaders whose lifestyle is fasting?

At that particular time in my life, I had to admit that I knew of no one. Now that I have searched, I have found a few—but, oh so few.

However, when I discover a person who does fast, I witness an unusually strong person, both with God and man.

The Introduction certainly whets a reader's appetite. In it the author heavily stresses that the book is a testimony, that it is not presented in a dogmatic vein. The first chapter, "I Discovered Fasting For Myself," is the Christian testimony of Andy Anderson. Like much of the book, it makes delightful devotional reading. Part of the testimony consists of references to the few isolated instances

of fasting that subtly accumulated to affect the author's life.

Unfortunately, Chapter Two, "Fasting and Medical Science," is limited to six and one-half pages. This is a sad commentary, not on the book, but on the fact that fasting has received so little attention in our time. The conclusions in the chapter are generally quotes by a handful of medical experts. None of the conclusions should come as any great surprise to the reader.

Based on my own recent study, Chapter Three, "Fasting and the Bible," is shorter than it ought to be. Mr. Anderson's conclusions are correct but there are more truths to be gleaned from the biblical texts.

The heart of the book is Chapter Four, "Fasting and the Spiritual Life." It is entirely proper that the thesis of this chapter follows the exegesis of the preceding chapter. One of Anderson's sentences summarizes this chapter nicely: "There can be no deeper or Spirit-filled life until there is a thorough repenting from and cleansing of sin." Obviously this is where fasting applies.

Biblical and extra-biblical material in Chapter Five illustrates "Different Kinds of Fasts." Included are diet fasts and ritual fasts. I suspect there are more that are not mentioned.

Testimonies from Anderson's diary as well as Arthur Blessitt, Corrie ten Boom, Ron Lewis, Billy Graham, Paul Ragland, Percy Ray, Lester Roloff, Ambert Rose, Charles Stanley, James Smith, and Jack Taylor comprise Chapter Six, "Messages from People Who Fast." Each testimony is authentic, positive, and heartwarming. It seems that everyone who has ever properly fasted (see Chapter Four) reports favorably.

The author's own conclusions about fasting appear in Chapter Seven. They are, briefly restated from the Introduction:

1. I am spiritually cleaner.
2. I have learned a new discipline ... I have realized that life is more than satisfying the physical cravings.
3. I have discovered a more effective prayer life.

4. I have found a previously unknown peace and confidence.
5. I have found an almost unbelievable strength to overcome temptation.

I especially appreciate the tone of the closing chapter, "A Few Cautions." Most of the bits of advice are aimed at avoiding the pharisaical aspect of fasting. The summary statement is, "place fasting into a Spirit-led life."

"Notes" are at the close, as well as a list of "Suggested Reading"—a short list at best because the sources are still limited.

This is delightful short reading in popular style. It is not, nor is it intended to be, the last word on the subject. I suspect, however, that it will blaze some trails. As I have personally sought the Spirit filled life and observed others on similar pilgrimages, I find we have overlooked a powerful grace at our disposal. Perhaps we campus ministers, who are concerned with spiritual growth among our student flocks, need to inhale this breath of fresh air.

Change & Challenge, by JONATHAN LINDSEY. Vol. 8, Faith of Our Fathers, Wilmington, North Carolina: Consortium Books. 144 pp. \$5.95

Reviewed by Robert B. Ford, Jr., Baptist Campus Minister, University of Montevallo, Montevallo, Alabama.

The Faith of Our Fathers series has been written by a group of church historians, including two Southern Baptists, Jonathan Lindsey and Glenn Hinson. Volume eight is important to campus ministers in understanding prevailing attitudes and theological postures in light of the developmental influences of recent history.

In *Change & Challenge*, Jonathan Lindsey has focused on the two decades, from 1955 to 1975, and the change that "has entered every phase of American life during these decades." He weaves the various strands of influence which affect certain areas in these periods of change so that the

strands form a coherent picture. Each chapter deals with one area of change, such as "changing times," "changing theological accents," and "changing movements."

A good example of the approach used by Lindsey may be seen in chapter two, "Changing Theological Accents." Lindsey first discusses the men he calls "The Great B's"—Barth, Brunner, Bonhoeffer and Bultmann. He next presents an overview of "Dialogue Theology," concentrating on the work of John A. T. Robinson, Harvey Cox, Joseph Fletcher, and Thomas J. J. Altizer. In a discussion of "Politicized Theology," he provides insight into the work of Reinhold Niebuhr, Jurgen Moltmann, and Helder Camara. In his "Death of the Greats," Lindsey further discusses the work of Neibhur, and adds the work of Paul Tillich, Thomas Merton, Martin Buber, and Abraham Joshua Herschel. That so many theological minds should be alluded to in so few pages is both a strength and a weakness of this volume. The strength is that it helps us understand that these two decades were indeed filled with many influential people who effected a great period of change. Another strength is that Lindsey's concise and interesting presentation of these men's thought leads the reader to want to do further study into their influence on the theological thought of the twentieth century. The weakness lies in the awesome task of doing even lip-service to this many men of great stature in such a brief space. There is some danger that readers not prone to deeper study will form their opinions from the limited material here available.

Chapter two concludes with two other brief studies that emphasize actions rather than men—"Emphasis on Activity of the Holy Spirit" and "Biblical Translation and Scholarship." Lindsey summarizes the chapter by drawing together all of the strands of influence from the two decades and states that "no sharp changes in basic beliefs were noted." He further states that "traditional theological lines remained evident." Lindsey concludes that the major contribution of the above-mentioned influential people appeared in their "broadening the

bases of conversation and modification of practices among communions."

The other chapters tie together other diverse threads into a series of pictures that clarify particular areas of concern. A charming epilogue, "From Adolescence to Middlecence," leaves the reader with a real feeling of authenticity because the author seems to write from experience.

I gladly recommend **Change & Challenge**. The author has provided a work that will serve as a good key to further study of a period of great influence in contemporary American culture. The work is an enjoyable overview of a period that involved the very essence of life for many of us.

New Seeds of Contemplation, by THOMAS MERTON. New York: New Directions Books 1961. 297 pp. \$2.45

Reviewed by Charles M. Benton, Campus Minister, Lynchburg Area Campuses, Virginia.

In the ten years since his death in Bangkok, Thailand, Thomas Merton's influence as an interpreter of the contemplative lifestyle has penetrated into many lives of persons seeking knowledge of God as the **Source** of all that is. One of the most helpful statements of that quest comes in **New Seeds of Contemplation**. This expansion of the earlier **Seeds of Contemplation** reflected Merton's growth and insight that came from his continued experience of solitude and the loneliness of other persons as they confronted their own needs and problems. The book leads one to reflect on the interior life and its meaning.

The nurturing of the deeply contemplative life comes as one grows to believe that:

"Every moment and every event of every man's life on earth plants something in his soul. For just as the wind carries thousands of winged seeds, so each moment brings with it germs of spiritual vitality that come to rest imperceptibly in the minds and wills of men. Most of these unnum-

bered seeds perish and are lost, because men are not prepared to receive them: for such seeds as these cannot spring up anywhere except in the good soil of freedom, spontaneity and love."

The contemplative person grows in deeper awareness of the meaning of these "seeds" through an awakening "to the possibility of uninterrupted dialogue with God." In that dialogue one is enlightened to experience the will of God more as an "interior invitation of personal love" than as an arbitrarily superimposed force. Merton indicates that the contemplative lives with the "certitude of God's dynamic presence" in his or her daily life. The contemplative, then, is one who is attentive to the spirit of God that is alive within his or her own being.

Merton clarifies his understanding of contemplation as "...the highest expression of man's intellectual and spiritual life. It is that life itself, fully awake, fully active, fully aware that it is alive. It is spiritual wonder. It is spontaneous awe at the sacredness of life, of being. It is gratitude for life, for awareness and for being."

The contemplative lives with the knowledge that life is a gift and learns to celebrate that life is indeed good.

The traditions surrounding campus ministry frequently reflect a call to a personal experience of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Seldom is that call accompanied by an awareness of either the tradition or practice of Christian mysticism, an awareness that would result from one's probing of the rich depths of those who have sensed the mystery of God and entered the mystery. Instead, there has been a shift toward more practical dimensions of belief that make rational sense. The contemplative transcends both faith and reason in responding to the invitation to enter the mystery. Merton says the experience is "practically incommunicable."

Throughout his works, which are descriptive in nature, Merton impresses the reader with the necessary relationship between contemplation and action. At the very heart of one's being there is a discovery of one's

vocation as it is given by the creative mystery. It is those "seeds," growing in "freedom, spontaneity, and love," that become the shaping realities in the life of the contemplative. One begins to sense that life is from God, that God is its source. Life from that source is always given for others. Contemplation is incarnational; it is awakening to the reality of our lives becoming the Body of Christ in particular ways.

The contemplative is, in one sense, one who represents a lifestyle that is not preoccupied with **self-understanding**. The incarnational dimension of contemplation is **kenotic**—self-emptying. One becomes increasingly aware that the indwelling spirit of God remains mysterious and hidden. It is God's spirit within us that knows us better than we know ourselves. In solitude the contemplative becomes more attentive to that mystery. One's sense of self becomes increasingly lost in Him Who Is Love. In solitude one is invited to enter the mystery. The invitation is always a gift. God is not approached through technique.

There is no true solitude except interior solitude. Interior solitude is possible so long as one refuses to live with the illusion that the strengths and gifts that are given separate us from the rest of mankind. As Merton points out that, "The saints are what they are, not because their sanctity makes them admirable to others, but because the gift of sainthood makes it possible for them to admire everybody else."

Solitude, for the contemplative, becomes the root of compassion. Contemplation and action may not be separated.

Mental prayer or meditation is another dimension within which the seeds of contemplation are raised to the level of one's attentiveness. Much attention is being given to a wide range of meditative styles and techniques on our campuses. Merton may be appreciated for moving beyond technique to the purposes of meditation. Basically there are two purposes—detachment and enlightenment.

The discipline of mental prayer aids one in getting oneself together—

collected. Above all one is helped to become detached from exterior realities and the press of temporal existence. One also begins to discover that the most significant meaning that meditation holds for the contemplative is a vital and dynamic awareness of the presence of God. Indeed, one is impelled toward "almost constant loving attention of God, and dependence on Him."

Meditation has not failed if one perceives only the hiddenness of God. One is then learning that God is greater than the images of our own understanding. The importance of making one's prayers simpler becomes obvious as one perceives that we do not know how to pray. Meditation is fulfilling when one becomes aware of the presence of the Spirit that intercedes with God on our behalf.

A brief review of **New Seeds of Contemplation** cannot touch more than a small part of its richness for those seriously engaged in an inner journey. The book lends itself creatively to a variety of uses in the campus minister's effort to introduce students to the deep tradition of Christian mysticism.

Women, Men and the Bible, by VIRGINIA RAMEY MOLLENKOTT. Abingdon Press: 1977 \$3.95 (paperbound reprint).

Reviewed by Judy Cadenhead, Campus Minister, Mississippi University for Women.

In an area of our society where intense feelings are raging, Virginia Mollenkott has been able to provide a broad picture of the various options we have as Christians for dealing with the issue of woman's awareness. Though she states her own understanding of the issue well, she expresses a sense of willingness to dialogue, a desire to help all persons come to a more educated understanding of what it means to be a woman functioning in our day, among us in our churches, around us anywhere the call to share the Good News comes forth.

Paramount in her approach is her regard for and use of Scripture. In each chapter of the book Scripture is woven in and out as the thread that ties the "woman" issue together. Mollenkott states that "the Bible must be our central source, and the teachings and behavior of Jesus must provide our major standard of judgment . . . He (Jesus) was very clear about the qualities that make a person truly great, authoritative, and important in the eyes of God."

Chapter one is a call for responsible personhood. In it she explains that Jesus' definition of the destiny of women and men is not by biology, alone. Destiny is spiritual commitment. Our internal willingness to cooperate with God opens up the same kind of blessedness for all (Luke 10: 41-42). Chapter two provides a brief survey of several popular books on the market that deal with the "woman" issue. Mollenkott describes the basic philosophy of these books and then shows how they compare to the biblical ideal.

Mollenkott correlates Hosea 11, Numbers 11:12, Psalms 22:9 and other scriptures with Isaiah 46:3-4, which pictures God as a midwife and life-long nurse-maid. She reminds us that our attempts to come to terms with an androgynous God (one having the nature of both male and female) are often inadequate and one-sided. As we come to see God as one who possesses both male and female characteristics we must remember that the point is not to see God as literally androgynous but to recognize that God transcends the limitations of human sexuality. Furthermore, there is no reason for us to assume that

nurturing and tender parenting are eternally feminine traits. All of God's people should be free to express their total personhood.

Mollenkott looks at Christ, the biblical symbol of wholeness, and proposes a harmony between the stereotyped masculine and feminine components in both men and women. This harmony is exemplified in the incarnation of Jesus. Jesus became "anthropos" (human), rather than "agner" (male) (see John 1:14). The biblical standard promotes wholeness within the individual personality and the Christian community, like the wholeness described in Ephesians 4:11-13.

Mollenkott suggests that the Christian way of relating is through mutual submission and loving service. Out of mutual concerns comes the call for honest and creative communication, including the working out together of anger and hostility until the air is genuinely cleared. The product of this mutual love and submission is an equality that does not sap energy from either person but creates new and joyous energy in both.

On a continuum from Mary Daly to Mrs. Sappington, Mollenkott falls halfway between them. The result is both good and bad. While the militant may find Mollenkott's approach tame and without impetus, the reactionary may find her heretical. Thus, she is a friend of neither. This reader, however, finds Mollenkott's approach as a good one—an adequate balance.

Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, respected as a theologian and distinguished as an English scholar, is professor of English and department chairperson at William Paterson College in New Jersey.