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Music in the Christian Community (Book Review)

Clarence Doornbos

Dordt College

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take more pains to ensure theological evenness in the series.

The Right to Live: The Right to Die by C. Everett Koop, M.D., Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois, \$2.95, 124 pages. Reviewed by E. L. Hebden Taylor, Associate Professor of Sociology.

The author of this book is surgeon-in-chief at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and professor of pediatric surgery at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Koop is thus eminently qualified to speak upon the two subjects which are the concern of his book, namely abortion and euthanasia.

We thank God for having raised up a Christian doctor and surgeon willing to stick his professional neck out for the sake of the teaching of God's Word and Law forbidding both abortion and euthanasia. In his book Dr. Koop provides God's people with plenty of arguments with which to confound the advocates of both abortion and euthanasia. Too often, amateurs have spoken upon these two issues and have brought their cause into disrepute. Now they have superb arguments to use in the continuing struggle to restore our nation to Scriptural principles.

The book examines current attitudes and trends from several perspectives: medical, personal, social, and theological. Dr. Koop turns the spotlight of a keen Christian conscience upon the Supreme Court ruling on abortion and upon the Karen Quinlan case, evaluating their influence upon the future of every American.

Dr. Koop predicts the following consequences of the Supreme Court decision in favor of abortion on demand: 1) It will make the law look ridiculous; 2) The liberty given to women to abort their fetuses will lead to license in other areas, such as giving relatives the right to choose whether a person should be allowed to die; 3) The right to die will lead to the right to kill in mercy; 4) It will contribute to the process of the depersonalization and dehumanization of our society; 5) There has been and will continue to be an enormous increase in the number of abortions. (Since January 1973 there have been over 3,000,000.) 6) It will lead to greater sexual promiscuity especially among young people; 7) Newborn infants who are not perfect will be the next target for

killing; and 8) Abortion will be completely in the hands of the illegal abortionists and clinics.

Koop warns us that if the Supreme Court's decision on abortion is not reversed by a constitutional amendment which is pro-life, "one can predict without question that the Supreme Court will soon also make euthanasia legal. It is with the latter subject that Koop deals in the second half of his book. This volume should be in the hands of every concerned Christian citizen of this country, to be read and acted upon.

Music in the Christian Community, by Dale Topp, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1976, 205 pages, \$4.95. Reviewed by Clarence Doornbos, Instructor in Music.

Music is often a controversial subject in the Christian community. Decisions regarding music are too often made subjectively with little regard for principles or guidelines of Biblical direction. Dale Topp has made a valuable contribution to the Christian community in this book, which provides helpful information on a wide variety of music-related situations.

The author takes neither an elitist approach, condemning all "inferior" music, nor a position which stresses the lowest common denominator. Rather, he proposes a realistic approach to music, which stresses the need for standards while respecting the demands of the situation and the needs of the people. Indeed, one of the points of emphasis in the book is that music should be appropriate. What is appropriate for a worship service may not necessarily be appropriate for a hymn-sing, a classroom, or a campfire sing.

The book repeatedly reminds Christians to go to Scripture for guidelines. The author logically builds his case for using a wide variety of quality worship music, but he also issues a call for Christian stewardship in selecting and using music in non-worship situations. Topp recognizes that God has given talents to musicians to produce everything from symphonic music to popular, rock, and jazz. The Christian is told to apply Biblical guidelines to help discern what is good and what is not good in each area. The author says that it is not right to condemn all rock any more than it would be right to assume that all orchestral

music is good.

Currently Chairman of the Music Department at Calvin College, Topp previously was a Christian school music teacher and a director of church choirs. His book reflects his background. As he discusses the philosophy of music, he constantly applies his ideas to real-life, practical situations. The book is filled with usable guidelines, suggestions, options, and ideas. Extensive chapters are devoted to music in the Christian church, home, and school. A great diversity of topics is covered, ranging from selecting a church organ or choosing a private music teacher for your child to proper use of a pitchpipe.

Additional themes stand out in the book. Topp calls for complete honesty and candor in dealing with fellow Christians. He stresses Ephesians 4:15 ("...speaking the truth in love") as a prescription for growth in the body of Christ. Topp emphasizes that this honesty must be coupled with encouragement and understanding. He also stresses the need for open-mindedness by both music leaders and "consumers" (listeners, congregation, etc.) When differences of opinion exist, there must be a willingness on both sides to "build bridges." Another theme is planning. Music should not be used haphazardly; its use in church or school should be governed by established policies, goals, and objectives.

Dr. Topp calls for Christians to take a genuine interest in music, to be convinced of its value, to be open minded, to be aware of the meaning and appropriateness of words, and to make decisions upon Scripturally-based principles. His book can be helpful to Christian music leaders, pastors, laymen, and teachers. Music in the Christian Community is a comprehensive, yet concise, handbook. It fills a real need in the Christian community and deserves a wide reading.

Psychology of Religion, by Wayne Oates, Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1973. Reviewed by Rich Buckham, Instructor in Psychology.

This is the twenty-first book of Oates, a professor in the Psychology of Religion at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary who has written extensively in the area of pastoral psychology and counseling.

In nineteen chapters, Oates attempts to

consider (apparently most of) the viewpoints on the various issues in the "psychology of religion." This is especially evident in the chapters on the definition of religion, the psychological roots of religion, the psychology of religious development, conversion, sin and forgiveness, and "toward a psychology of faith." Although these particular comparative analyses are valuable in themselves, Oates often seems to be syncretic in his own summary positions.

Other chapters critique such phenomena as mysticism and the life of the spirit, prayer and non-verbal communication, sleep, dreams and revelation, habit and religious ritual, loyalty and conscience, commitment and alienation, decision-making and responsibility, ecstasy and the non-rational (are we too rationalistic in our our faith-life?), and religion and psychopathology.

The subject matter of the above chapters pretty well covers the traditional field of investigation of the "psychology of religion." Even though Oates sometimes does not adequately conceptualize or give an adequate perspective on each of the phenomena dealt with, the phenomena themselves are certainly of high interest and worthy of serious attention. After all, the above phenomena are of the warp and woof of the Christian's life and are often more salient in that life than questions of doctrine or polity. This book offers a broad overview of the many facets of such Christian experience and is a useful introduction to that study.

Finally, a few comments about his first chapter, "Definitions of Religion." In this chapter Oates considers misconceptions about religion, a Biblical view of religion (mainly word studies of the Latin persona, religio, and various Hebrew terms used with respect to the whole man, such as "heart"—some noteworthy points here), and various philosophical and psychological definitions of religion. It is not clear whether "religion" for Oates is merely a dimension of (some?) men's lives or the very condition and matrix of all men's lives. Further, Oates apparently wants to take a psychological approach to defining religion and the totality of man's religious experience. But one might ask if such a scientific definition and analysis can be made of man's relationship with God in-itself or only of the various experiences and actions that reflect that relationship. That is, is there such a thing as the psychology of religion?