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Faught, C. Brad. Review of *Robert Runcie: The Reluctant Archbishop*, by Humphrey Carpenter. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1996. *Anglican and Episcopal History* 68, no. 2 (1999): 274-275.

**HUMPHREY CARPENTER.** *Robert Runcie: The Reluctant Archbishop.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1997. Pp. xiv + 401, preface, index. \$12.99 (paper).

Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1980 to 1991, is given unconventional treatment by Humphrey Carpenter in this bestselling biography. Seldom are the lives of (living) clerics probed in the relaxed and sometimes slightly irreverent way that Carpenter chooses to in this comprehensive study of Runcie. The book is divided into two parts, the first of which deals with Runcie's life until 1980 and his enthronement as archbishop of Canterbury, the second with his years as spiritual leader of the Church of England and the seventy million members of the Anglican communion worldwide.

Runcie was born and raised in suburban Liverpool in the home of an anti-clerical father ("Never trust parsons or policemen") and a hair-dresser mother. His higher education was interrupted by WWII, during which he served in the Scots Guards. Eventually, Runcie graduated from Oxford with a first class degree in 1948. Carpenter recounts closely Runcie's early days in the church and illustrates the development of the Runcie style which culminates with the former archbishop described as a "classic" Anglican; classic, in the sense of Runcie being "skeptical—with a sense of humour," writes Carpenter.

Carpenter, a son of a former bishop of Oxford, seems a "reluctant Anglican" and the biography is almost reluctantly presented as it follows a non-linear pattern weaving together both the life of Runcie and the way in which the biography itself came to life. This method of writing may be offputting to those who wish to read an account of Runcie's life that proceeds in a straightforward manner. However, if such a reservation is dispensed with, Carpenter's style draws the reader into the problems and the delights of dealing with a living subject who appears unafraid to state clearly his views on belief and on the issues of the day.

Carpenter early admits to the biographer's usual "liking" of the subject. Criticisms of Runcie are therefore left mostly to others such as Bishop Hugh Montefiore, Terry Waite, or the late Gareth Bennett. Runcie's relations with the Royal Family and with the Margaret Thatcher Conservatives are closely examined and provide some of Runcie's best quotes. On the Queen's serenity in the face of adversity: "She's the only person who has the ability to rise above it." On Prince Charles' ambiguous relationship with Anglicanism: "It would quite help if he loved the

Church of England a bit more." On the state of mind of the late Diana, Princess of Wales: "What I quickly saw she needed was some encouragement, and some, 'Are you all right, girl?'" On the aims of the Tory government: "If the human consequences of such aims mean unemployment on an unprecedented scale, poverty, bureaucracy, despair about the future of our communities, inequitable sharing of the sacrifice called for, then the objectives must be called in question."

Carpenter's treatment of Runcie is laudatory but not hagiographic. Runcie was "the right face in the right place at the right time," according to Carpenter, and such luck accounts for his rise in the church more than does outstanding ability. Runcie instinctively followed a temperate course in navigating the Church of England through the 1980s: the Falklands War, women's ordination, Terry Waite's disappearance, the vicissitudes of the Royal Family, and so on, and thus he was the ideal archbishop. In the 1840s, the prime minister, Lord Melbourne, said to a rather excitable Oxford divinity professor: "Be easy, I like an easy man." In Carpenter's estimation, in his time Runcie was such a man.

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**TERENCE MURPHY AND ROBERTO PERIN, EDs.** *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996. Pp. xii + 456, preface, index. \$27.95 (paper).

This collaborative work by five Canadian scholars is intended, as readers will gather from Terence Murphy's introduction, to become the standard historical introduction to Christianity in Canada, replacing H. H. Walsh, John Moir, and John Webster Grant, *A History of the Christian Church in Canada* (3 vols., 1967-1972). Both the older and the newer works do very competently what historical surveys are supposed to do: they identify important persons, describe key events, and discuss the more conspicuous issues of historical interpretation.

How are the two works different? In the newer book, Murphy proposes that the older book was content to tell the "outer story" of the churches—their institutional character, their leaders, their impact on the