

Book Notes

DONALD R. CUTLER (ed.) *The Religious Situation: 1968*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1968. 986 pp. \$15.00.

The first of a proposed annual, international survey of religious trends, this volume covers a host of topics somewhat unified by the themes of sociological investigation or the problems of accommodation of traditional religion to a modern world. Although generalizations on the complex and unmeasurable subject of religion are often less than scientific, this work contains voluminous amounts of such probing, together with fascinating if speculative projections of present trends. For instance, O'Dea's "Catholic Crisis" poses the question of whether the synthesis made by the Second Vatican Council between modernity and Catholicism will bring a relevant reinterpretation rather than a sell-out of Christian faith. In an artful interpretation of American religious statistics, Gaustad shows the trends of increased church affiliation on the part of individuals and increased mergers on the part of churches and indicates that one realistic possibility in a decade is the existence of but three major Protestant divisions—Baptists, Lutherans, and a "United Church." Although the smallest of the "big ten" in America, the LDS Church is given the special attention of a separate article on what the author, David L. Brewer, sees as the encompassing problem of Mormon *aggiornamento*, the practice of withholding priesthood from the Negro. In a brief evaluation of Brewer, Lowell Bennion admits the significance of the problem but disagrees that it is the microcosm of all that is presently happening in Mormonism. In fact, because of Brewer's redundancy and overcertainty in stating his theories, there is more realistic insight in Bennion's eight pages than Brewer's twenty-eight. Brewer and Bennion both leave the erroneous impression that no basis for the Mormon stand on the Negro and the priesthood antedates Brigham Young. Like O'Dea's earlier study of Mormonism, Brewer's Mormon sociology abounds both in insights and errors, most of which arise either from overgeneralizations or lack of depth in LDS history.