

CHURCH HISTORY

*Studies in
Christianity & Culture*

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CHURCH HISTORY (ISSN 0009-6407)

Jerald C. Brauer (1921–1999)

Jerald C. Brauer, coeditor of *Church History* for the thirty-five years between 1963 and 1998, died of leukemia on September 26, 1999, at the age of seventy-eight. Memorial services were held in Chicago on October 1 and November 3.

During those three and a half decades of editorship, Brauer served chiefly as book review editor. In consultation with his coeditors, the advisory editors, the members of the Council of the American Society of Church History, and specialists in various periods and fields of history, Brauer selected reviewers of many thousands of books. He corresponded with them, coped with the tardiness that seems endemic to the reviewers' ways of life, and with successive teams of graduate student assistants to the editor, saw the reviews through to print.

Knowing how fateful reviews could be for both the destiny of books and, he knew only too well, the future of historians on academic appointment, tenure, and promotion tracks, he was scrupulous about the choice of reviewers. He did what he could to assure that disinterested reviewers approached their work fair-mindedly. Brauer liked to quote Sir Steven Runciman to the effect that historians worked "under the watchful scrutiny of their colleagues." He put that awareness to work as well when consulted about manuscripts submitted to or solicited by his coeditors, consultations that occurred in respect to every issue for those thirty-five years of his stewardship.

Aware as well that overall policies of *Church History* were set at the annual meetings of the Council of the Society, he was coauthor of the reports to the Society and attended most of the December, later January, meetings of the organization. A devoted family person who relished the December academic break as an opportunity to be with his family at a rural Wisconsin getaway, he was a consistent murmurer about the dates of meetings during the week between Christmas and New Year's and a celebrator of the January schedule adopted in recent years.

Wisconsin-born Brauer, an ordained Lutheran minister who attended Carthage College and took his B.D. from Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1945, moved briskly through postgraduate studies and received the Ph.D. in 1948 from the University of Chicago. After two years at Union Theological Seminary in New York,

where he was assistant professor to Paul Tillich, he returned to Chicago and spent the rest of his career at its divinity school.

Brauer taught in the divinity school and the history department until retirement in 1991, but continued his graduate seminars, even when confined to his home by illness, through the autumn quarter before he died. He was advisor to scores of doctoral candidates who are now dispersed throughout North American academies or active in various nonacademic vocations, and remained in regular contact with most of them. While he insisted that the pastoral and the professorial roles dare never be confused, and while he could be an extremely demanding and critical teacher and advisor, he was remembered as "pastoral" and "personal" by those who paid tribute to him.

At home in environments described as "secular" and "pluralistic," beginning at the University of Chicago, Brauer helped this journal make a transition from its original at-homeness almost exclusively among theological-school historians to the broader orbit in which it moves and which it serves in recent decades, as a scanning of the list of reviewers he chose through the years demonstrates.

At the age of 33 in 1955 he became dean of the Federated Theological Faculty and, after that Federated experiment, of the University of Chicago Divinity School until 1970. He took great pride in having helped appraise, attract, and appoint world-class senior professors and develop a generation of younger scholars in the various divinity disciplines.

As the Naomi Shenstone Donnelley Professor, Brauer put his main energies into teaching, and editing this journal and more than thirty books. His own topics developed out of his graduate work in Puritanism, especially Puritan mysticism and a special interest in the conversion experience. *Protestantism in America*, *Images of Religion in America*, *Luther and the Reformation*, and a biography of John Nuveen were his book publications.

Jerald C. Brauer is remembered as a faithful editor, member of this Society and the company of historians, a person devoted to faith, family, friendship—and demanding standards of scholarship.

Martin E. Marty

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