

## Ministers of a New Medium: Broadcasting Theology in the Radio Ministries of Fulton J. Sheen and Walter A. Maier

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InterVarsity Press (Jun 21, 2022)

Hardcover \$40.00 (368pp)

978-1-5140-0322-0

*Ministers of a New Medium* brings fresh insight into Christian evangelism, tracing the lives and work of two pioneering preachers from the early days of radio in the US.

Walter Maier, a Lutheran pastor, and Fulton Sheen, a Catholic priest, took to the airwaves and became household names because of their work explaining faith and professing the power of God in the 1930s and 1940s. Both men struggled to adapt to the new medium before becoming masters of their crafts. The book includes a wealth of biographical material for both men, followed by thoughtful homiletic studies of their theological ideas and preaching methods.

The book showcases a pivotal time in American media and the impressive ministry changes made to meet it. It sets the context of the men's work well, covering the beginnings of CBS and ABC radio. The medium "demanded a cogent establishment of relevance, forced a clear, crisp, progression of thought in each message, and avoided the over-taxation of listener's attention spans." Maier's Lutheran Hour and Sheen's Catholic Hour became quite popular, but filling those hours with compelling content was still a challenge.

Throughout the book come fascinating insights into the preachers' methods: Sheen never wrote out the texts of his sermons, for example. He even avoided outlines. Instead, he opted for diagrams that showed "perhaps, three big ideas." And each preacher tried to express "capital T truths" by expounding on substantive theological concepts. Both adapted their efforts to the radio well, maintaining a high standard of intellectual and theological depth of expression; their legacies are ones of thoughtful, robust work.

*Ministers of a New Medium* follows two pastors who transformed their ministries in radio's early days, delivering moving, accessible sermons.

JEREMIAH ROOD (July / August 2022)

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