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Lind's "A Charlie Brown religion: Exploring the spiritual life and work of Charles M. Schulz" (Book Review)

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In the Charlie Brown Halloween Special, *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown*, Linus made the observation that there are three things that should never be discussed, "Politics, religion, and the Great Pumpkin" (p.85). Yet, Schultz, himself, breached that gap, in his many comic strips as he explored spiritual matters from the viewpoint of the innocence of children. Moreover, he sought to convey "mature themes of grief and hope packaged in pint-sized characters" (p. 211) in many of his comic strips and television specials. Schultz seems to have gotten to the heart of childhood concerns without using preachy overtones or becoming unnecessarily macabre. In this volume, Lind has endeavored to show the man behind these beloved comic icons.

This volume appears to be a follow-up to the book, *The Gospel According to Peanuts* by Robert Short and details the life and somewhat convoluted spiritual journey of Schultz. Upon graduation from high school, Schultz enlisted in the armed forces and fought in World War II. When he returned to the States, he sought to find his place in society and attached himself to a small community of believers at a Church of God, where he professed faith in Christ. He would infuse that belief into many of his comic strips; yet he declined to impart his beliefs to his children – a likely reflection of the lack of spiritual training in own childhood. Lind has detailed that journey through his own research into family archives and interviews with family and friends. This does arise a concern – it appears that some of the letters to which Lind alludes have no viable citation either in the footnotes or the bibliography, e.g., the apparent correspondence between Schultz and Ronald Reagan (p. 112), who was then governor of California.

This book is most suitable for libraries whose institutions have courses that emphasize pop culture. There are many helps regarding the writings and productions of Charles Schultz, including listing of television specials, date of initial broadcast, as well as well as rewards won by each. The index provides help and detailed information, so that information is easily accessible. Overall Lind has provided fresh information and insight to the creator of a beloved American icon – the Peanuts family.

Reviewer

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