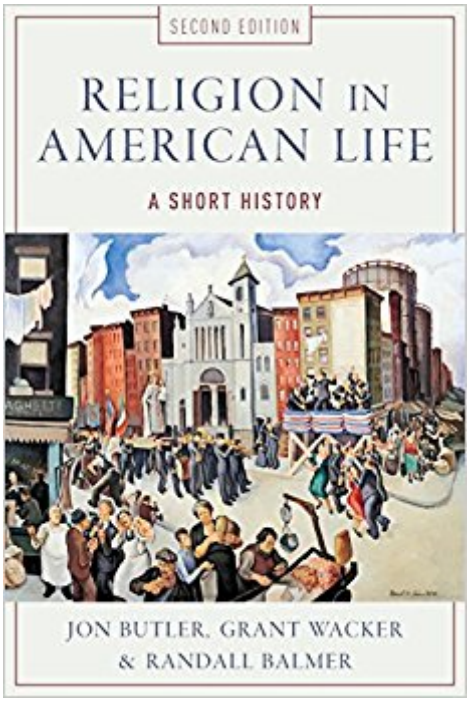
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Religion In American Life: A Short History



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Synopsis

"Quite ambitious, tracing religion in the United States from European colonization up to the 21st century.... The writing is strong throughout."--Publishers Weekly (starred review)"One can hardly do better than Religion in American Life.... A good read, especially for the uninitiated. The initiated might also read it for its felicity of narrative and the moments of illumination that fine scholars can inject even into stories we have all heard before. Read it."--Church HistoryThis new edition of Religion in American Life, written by three of the country's most eminent historians of religion, offers a superb overview that spans four centuries, illuminating the rich spiritual heritage central to nearly every event in our nation's history. Beginning with the state of religious affairs in both the Old and New Worlds on the eve of colonization and continuing through to the present, the book covers all the major American religious groups, from Protestants, Jews, and Catholics to Muslims, Hindus, Mormons, Buddhists, and New Age believers. Revised and updated, the book includes expanded treatment of religion during the Great Depression, of the religious influences on the civil rights movement, and of utopian groups in the 19th century, and it now covers the role of religion during the 2008 presidential election, observing how completely religion has entered American politics.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Yet another history of religion in America? And with all the flaws of previous histories? Religion in this book essentially means Protestant Christianity, with a few side glances at Judaism, Catholicism, Native American religion, Islam, and Asian religions. America generally means the United States,

except in the Colonial period, when a few references are made to New France in the north and New Spain in the south. In this short history by Butler (Religion in Colonial America), Grant Wacker (Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture), and Randall Balmer (Religion in 20th-Century America), the reader receives a large catalog of data and events that are difficult to place in any pattern of development or interpretation. The authors seem unable to provide an outline of trends or changes that supply a context for understanding this complex history. The classic work is still Sidney Ahlstrom's A Religious History of the American People; to set this story in true pluralistic context, Ahlstrom's book should be read alongside Diana L. Eck's recent and highly regarded A New Religious America. The reader would be better served by these two books than this new one. Not recommended.James A. Overbeck, Atlanta-Fulton P.L., GA Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Praise for the Previous Edition:"This 'short history' of American religion is actually quite ambitious, tracing religion in the United States from European colonization up to the 21st century. The three authors, esteemed historians at Yale, Duke and Columbia, respectively, each tackle a century or two: Butler takes on the colonial period and the 18th century, Wacker continues the tale with the 19th century, and Balmer explores the flowering of religious diversity in the 20th. If the prose sounds familiar, it's because these three sections were originally issued as three separate books for the young adult nonfiction market; they have been gathered together here as one survey. Each chapter closes with a primary source, as in the original books, and the survey boasts tip-ins of the same facsimiles, photographs and illustrations that made the YA books so special.The writing is strong throughout, and will be accessible to undergraduates."--Publisher's Weekly, Starred Review". . . In the realm of American religious history, one can hardly do better than Religion in American Life, the collective production of three highly regarded scholars in the field and produced by Oxford in a handsome small-page format that invites rather than discourages potential readers. . . Religion in American Life is a good read, especially for the uninitiated. The initiated, however, might also read it for its felicity of narrative and the moments of illumination that fine scholars can inject even into stories we have all heard before. Read it."--Church History"The three authors' distinct voices come through in their respective sections. And as one ends his century, and the next takes the baton as if a relay race, they overlap on some events and give them different emphases....This is not a Christian history, though that faith naturally predominates. The homage to minorities strikes a good balance, and is not the forced multiculturalism seen in some textbooks....For a weekend reader who feels beind on a half millennia of American faith adventures, they can be brought up to speed in a

fortnight, and certainly before the Apocalypse." -- Larry Witham, Washington Times"This 'short history,' authored by three of the leading scholars in the field, provides an excellent overview of religion in American history." -- Bryan F. Le Beau, University of Missouri, Kansas City, American Studies"It is refreshing to be able to use 'accessible' and 'authoritative' in the same sentence, and even nicer to find these two attributes in a single book. Each author is an acclaimed authority in his period and, happily, each is a gifted writer. The result is a splendid introduction to American religion for the classroom--and far beyond."--Edwin Gaustad

Needed this book for a class that's on Religion in America. Reads quickly and the information is thorough. Great notes and bibliography.

a little bit about everyone. stuff i did not know about who thought about what when. seems i guess dated, i wonder if there is not more known. on the other hand battles over evolution have not quite finished, and religion as something to use to get people to vote your way, is an american cynical tradition. i guess i wonder that we as a people have not grown up much.

Basically a run down of the history of all religions. The best part is that it covers a lot of different angles to the story, like Spanish settlement in the South West, Catholicism, non Christian religions, the lot really. This makes it a good reference work. I recommend it particularly for home schoolers and students who want more than what is in the text books.

Good

Great quality

This is a required reading text for a course I am auditingat the local university. My wife was kind enough to acquireit for me to use in the course.It is an analysis of the indfluince of various religions butparticularly Christianity in the early stages of the Americanrepublic, and the iinfluence of the variety of religions in thecurrent reality of the 21st century, as the nation becomesa destination for non-wester-Europian immigration.Well written and enjoyable!Robert Stocking

What a pleasant suprise! This book is objectively written; easily readable and accurate without bias and proved to be a incredible resource of information. So much so that I intend to use the book as

our text for an OLLI course that I will be offering to Seniors in our seminars on continuing education.

This book is a relatively concise narrative of religion in American history and serves as a good introduction. There are textbooks with more detail but to get an overview for the general reader this book covers alot of ground.

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