
The Old Religion in a New World: The History of North American Christianity. By Mark A. Noll. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. ISBN 0802849482. Pp. 340.

With many introductory surveys of North American Christianity already on the market, a new work on the same field seems to lack real necessity. Yet, for its niche in the market, *The Old Religion in a New World* is an excellent interpretive survey of North American Christianity. At first, it seems strange that the man who wrote one authoritative survey of Christianity in North America would have to write another even more brief survey of the same subject. In 1992, Mark Noll published his *History of Christianity in United States and Canada*, but this volume was meant for a different readership. The present volume was first conceived and published for a German audience under the title *Das Christentum in Nord Amerika*. Yet, Noll quickly realized that this volume would be equally useful for a North American audience. His focus is to find what is new in the outworking of organized Christian religion on this continent by comparison with the European origins of that religion.

In chapter One, Noll provides an explanation of the factors involved in the study of the movement of Christianity from Europe to North America. This movement did not happen in a short period of time or by a uniform group of people, yet there were certain characteristics that seemed to affect all groups involved during the whole period of huge immigration from Europe. Noll points out the factors of territory, ethnicity, plurality and a relative absence of confessional conservatism that were part of this adjustment. Having characterized in broad ways the forces working on the American scene, Noll, in the subsequent seven chapters, does an historical survey of Christianity in North America. The first couple of these seven chapters deal with early colonization and the church becoming American. In chapters 4 and 5, the questions of the separation of church and state and the high tide of Protestantism are dealt with. Noll's next three chapters deal with the history after the Civil war until the turn of the millennium. Finally, Noll ends his book with a quartet of chapters on American Theology, the history of Christianity in Mexico and Canada, the fate of Lutherans and Catholics, and a chapter on day-to-day spirituality among North American Christians.

Overall this work is a superb introduction to the history of Christianity in North America. The strength of this work comes from several very important features. First, the book is very readable. It keeps the non-scholarly readers interest all the while being a fine piece of historiography. Second, the appendices to the work are very helpful. His charts of the present state of Christianity in North America, regional variations of Christianity, and his chronology are very useful for the student of American Christianity and, especially, are useful in that they are very up-to-date. Third, although it is a short survey, it gives

the reader a very good framework from which to process further information. The first chapter, for example, gave a wonderful key for understanding the subsequent history that he presented. Additionally in this regard, the historian has a real challenge to include the important and relevant material. In this survey, Noll includes many details that other surveys have not. He often focuses on the history of women and minority groups, which, even in their own time, exerted much influence on the history of Christianity in America. Further, Noll includes a short, but pithy, treatment of the history of Mexican Christianity. This treatment is far too short, but at least it is present. For his audience, Noll has made the book very readable and has provided a very good set of footnotes and a good bibliography that will aid those wanting a good introduction to the history of Christianity in North America.

Jason Zuidema

McGill University

Christian Faith and Modern Democracy: God and Politics in the Fallen World.
By Robert P. Kraynak. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001. ISBN 0268022658. Pp xvi + 344.

"Democracy, I do not conceive that God ever did ordain as a fit government for church or for commonwealth" (John Cotton, 1636). Robert Kraynak, Professor of Political Science at Colgate University, places this quotation near the beginning of his book, for he also has his doubts. Modern liberals, he claims, and many modern Christians, "are in a state of denial about the predicament of liberal democracy" (45), which "proclaims in principle but subverts in practice the dignity of man" (29).

Kraynak's complaint is that liberal democracy, together with its human rights stable-mate, is ideologically driven by a philosophy committed to a new notion of human dignity as autonomy of reason and will: a philosophy which aims at personal and political empowerment but produces a soul-less and often illiberal culture or political system. To this complaint he adds a Solzhenitsyn-like conundrum: "Modern liberal democracy needs Christianity to support its basic moral principles, but Christianity is not necessarily a liberal or a democratic religion" (269), nor indeed is it committed to the support of any particular political system. Given its Augustinian doctrine of the two cities, it is "transpolitical though not entirely apolitical" in nature, and ought to maintain a healthy scepticism about the democratic age and its human rights discourse (54; cf. 153).

What Christianity calls for is a stable constitutional order with modest (non-utopian) aspirations in the temporal realm and a willingness to facilitate, or at least not to hinder, the spiritual life of its people. For Kraynak such an order is best exemplified in a mixed regime, that is, in a constitutional monar-