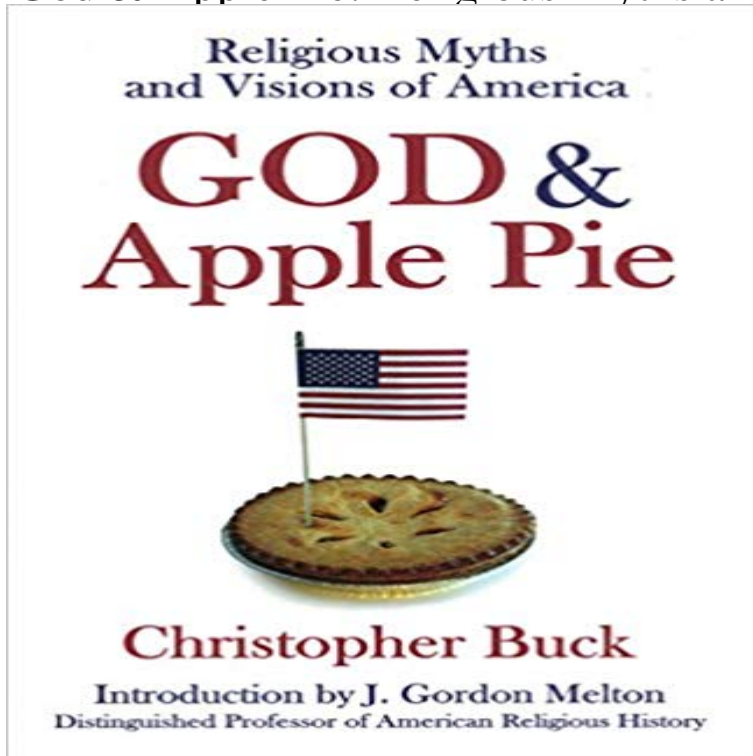


God & Apple Pie: Religious Myths and Visions of America



With an introduction by J. Gordon Melton (Distinguished Professor of American Religious History, Baylor University), *God & Apple Pie: Religious Myths and Visions of America*, (revised edition) by Christopher Buck, is about an unusual religious topic: the United States of America. America is, at once, nation and notion, country and creed, republic and rhetoric. This book is about Providence and principle ? the relationship of the supernatural world to the worlds superpower. America is not in the Bible, nor in the Quran. Yet America today pulsates with religious significance. America is a word that has taken on mythic proportions. Eleven religions have been selected for their distinctive perspectives on America: (1) Native American religion (Iroquois); (2) Protestant Christianity (the Puritans); (3) the Christian Right; (4) Roman Catholicism; (5) Judaism (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist); (6) The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons); (7) Christian Identity (White nationalists); (8) Nation of Islam (Black nationalists); (9) Islam (especially Radical Islamists and Progressive Muslims); (10) Buddhism (Tibetan and Soka Gakkai); and (11) the Bahai Faith. Over the course of American history, religious myths and visions of America tend to reflect an ever-changing American civil society, whether as a function of its social evolution or as a catalyst of it. The result is: Religions re-mythologize America. And: Religions re-envision America. In his Introduction, Professor Melton writes: Far from being an interesting additional topic for the religious dilettante, the discussion around the theological reality that is America periodically bursts forth as an important item on the nations agenda, from the place of prayer services in the White House, to the issuance of an annual government report on religious persecution, to the rise

of contemporary terrorism. . . I can, as a scholar, reflect on the contribution that this book, *God & Apple Pie: Religious Myths and Visions of America*, is making to our understanding of the American mosaic and how various segments of the religious community have found their way to being American. I welcome its information that allows me to empathize with and make informed decisions relative to those with whom I might align (or oppose) as I sally forth in the public square. And on a personal level, I welcome the authors invitation for me to meet anew the residents of my neighborhood, those who shop in the same stores I do, send their children to the same schools my grandchildren attend, and diligently work toward their own appropriation of the American dream. *God & Apple Pie* invites serious reflection on what it means to be an American, particularly from a religious perspective.

REVIEWS On the premise that America is both nation and notion, this project is a breath of methodological fresh air. *Religious Myths and Visions of America* is a novel, imaginative, and rigorously scholarly contribution to comparative religion, worthy of serious attention and debate. Prof. Todd Lawson, University of Toronto emeritus This is an ambitious and unique work, covering a broad range of religious visions of America in their global context. Bucks firm theoretical framework and rigorous documentation make this a significant contribution to contemporary discussions of the place, role, and future of the diversity of religions that make up America today. Prof. Andrew Rippin, University of Victoria, Canada emeritus

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