FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

God and Race in American Politics: A Short History

Mark A. Noll
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During the years leading up to the Civil War and in the years immediately following it, various Christian groups used the Bible either to support slavery or to condemn it. One hundred years later during the struggle for Civil Rights, most of the leadership in the Civil Rights movement arose out of religious communities.

Using these two historical periods as bookends, Noll, the dean of American church historians, eloquently though briefly examines the fraught but enduring relationship between race, religion, and politics in the United States. He argues that race has always been among the most influential elements—sometimes the single most influential—in American history, and he contends that religion has been crucial for the workings of race in American politics. Noll concludes that race and religion together comprise one of the nation's deepest and most enduring moral problems but also deeply influence the nation's politics. The author focuses on three major historical periods when race and religion transformed politics. From 1830 to 1860, slavery overshadowed all other political issues; from 1865 to 1900, the nation gave up on the notion of equal rights, leaving African Americans unprotected in the civil sphere; and from 1950 until today, sphere. Between 1950 and the present the battles for civil rights were won, but with sometimes unintended consequences. Because of this relationship between race and religion, Noll can show that during the Civil War, for example, "it was warfare that allowed deep-seated republican scruples to be set aside, but in this case it was warfare defined as work for the armies of the Lord."

Noll's incisive history offers a significant introduction to the tangled relationship of race, religion, and politics in America.

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