

like Deepak Sarma, to castigate *Nostra Aetate* as “a futile attempt at engaging in a one-sided dialogue” (207), which, according to postcolonial standards “is rather a theological justification for continued exploitation and perhaps, well-intentioned, condescension” (190). Yet these issues, coming to terms with the factual plurality of religions and how one’s own religion positions itself toward the others, belong to the realm of theology of religions. This is not yet inter-religious dialogue. It can pave the way toward it; however, at times, it may still seem a long one.

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*Race and New Religious Movements in the USA: A Documentary Reader.*

Edited by Emily Suzanne Clark and Brad Stoddard. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. xii + 187 pages. \$20.96 (paper).

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In his classic study on American religion, Nathan Hatch begins with the words of a leading Federalist, in the aftermath of the Second Great Awakening: “All Christendom has been decomposed, broken in pieces, and resolved into new combinations and affinities” (Harrison Gray Otis, 1836, in *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 3). By the time Massachusetts became the last state to abolish its established church (1833), religion in the United States had taken on the “fragmentation” and “privatization” that made the new republic a fertile ground for new religious movements. During that same period, the country had not only become a magnet for European immigrants of multiple nationalities, but also had slowly but surely dispossessed the Indigenous peoples of their lands and imported millions of African slaves to fuel its economic growth.

In their new documentary reader, Emily Suzanne Clark and Brad Stoddard have provided an excellent resource for exploring the confluence of these two characteristics of religion in the American context. In the first chapter, the editors provide a carefully constructed introduction, exploring the terminology and explaining the scope of their anthology. They explore the development of the two modern categories at the heart of their study, religion and race, as well as the emergence of the academic study of new religious movements after the Second World War. In defining their scope as the “blending of racial and religious rhetoric and identities in US history” (2), they broaden the field to include not only Black Americans, but also Native, Asian, and white Americans. They see this blending of religious and racial discourses as “a persistent theme in American history” (4). The next sixteen chapters are arranged

chronologically, from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first, each chapter opening with an introduction by the editors, followed by excerpts from selected documents related to the respective new religious movement and a short bibliography for additional reading.

Some of these new religious movements are well known: Latter Day Saints (chapter 4), Ku Klux Klan (chapter 7), and Nation of Islam (chapter 13). But seen through the prism of the blending of religious and racial discourses, new perspectives quickly emerge. Other movements, though long forgotten, offer new insights into American social and religious history. Handsome Lake, for example (chapter 1), was born around 1735 and became a prophet of the Iroquois people, blending native traditions and Quaker teachings. The document for this chapter is a selection of excerpts from *The Code of Handsome Lake, the Seneca Prophet*, published in 1913 by Arthur C. Parker.

Several chapters are dedicated to Black American movements: Malcolm X and Nation of Islam (chapter 13), International Peace Mission and Father Divine (chapter 12), whose picture appears on the cover image of the paperback edition of this book, and Rabbi Wentworth A. Matthew of the Commandment Keepers (chapter 10). After immigrating from the West Indies to New York (Harlem) in 1919, Matthew founded one of several groups of “Ethiopian Hebrews” or “Black Jews” that spread throughout the country. He taught that Black people are descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel and traced their lineage back to Abraham, Isaac, and Moses. Over the first decade of his new movement, Matthew removed Christian imagery and teachings, founded the Israelite Rabbinical Academy, and designated their worship spaces as synagogues.

The final chapter not only includes documents from the twenty-first century, but is also one of the examples of a non-Christian and nonbiblical religious movement. Odinism (chapter 17) promoted a revival of worship of the Norse gods and the ancestral religion of the Teutonic tribes, beginning in nineteenth-century Germany, revived in the Nazi period, then taken up by white supremacist groups in the United States. The excerpts include writings of David Lane, who was sentenced to 190 years in prison for the murder of Alan Berg, a Jewish talk-radio host. A core Odinit principle holds “that anarchism is the preferred system of governance for the Aryan race” (172).

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