

one can only be for or actively against theist religion. Efforts to achieve a religion of humanity or a religion within secularism or a religious humanism flummoxed this binary and appeared either oxymoronic or deceitful.

Schmidt gives us the fascinating history of a tiny minority: freethinkers in search of a shared, ethical secularism that might carry religious meaning and serve in the place of religion without becoming one. The book shows secularism as a religious project (of sorts). Written with clarity and verve, *The Church of Saint Thomas Paine* will appeal to readers in and beyond academia who wish to understand the sincere and sometimes successful efforts to craft secular substitutes for theistic religion.

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***“For the Good of Their Souls”: Performing Christianity in Eighteenth-Century Mohawk Country.* By William B. Hart. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2020. 288 pp, 6 b&w illustrations. \$90.00 hardcover; \$26.95 paper.**

William B. Hart’s, *“For the Good of their Souls”* joins a vibrant and growing body of scholarship devoted to the study of missions and Native Christianity in the eighteenth-century Northeast. Hart’s book is a careful exploration of the Anglican mission to Mohawk peoples over the course of a century from its founding in 1712 at Fort Hunter, New York, near the Mohawk town of Tiononderoge, located at the confluence of the Mohawk River and Schoharie Creek. After laying the theoretical and methodological groundwork (more on that below) in the *Introduction*, Hart offers a brief overview of Mohawk political, religious, and cultural life in the decades leading up to the Fort Hunter mission, including an account of Mohawk engagement with the Jesuits of New France and the New France and Dutch Calvinists of New York. The next three chapters explore the beginning, middle, and final years of the Anglican mission in the Mohawk Valley, which came to an end with the onset of the American Revolution. A final chapter continues the focus on the Mohawk engagement with Anglican Christianity in the diaspora, focusing on the Grand River settlement led by Thayendanegea/Joseph Brant and the Quinte Bay settlement of Tyendinaga led by John Deserontyon.

With the subtitle, “Performing Christianity,” Hart joins a rich historiographical conversation about the meaning of Native engagement with Christianity. In recent decades, this dialog has shifted from a focus on the extent and authenticity of “conversion”—which unintentionally affirms European Christianity as the benchmark—to an exploration of the forms and meanings of indigenized Christianity. Linford Fisher in his *Indian Great Awakening: Religion and the Shaping of Native Cultures in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) makes the case for studying “affiliation” rather than conversion, allowing for gradations of engagement without the value judgment of authentic versus “merely” strategic. My work, in *To Live upon Hope: Mohicans and Missionaries in the Eighteenth-Century Northeast* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press,

2008), focused on understanding how two Mohican communities engaged different forms of European Christianity as ways to support the perpetuation of core Mohican values within the context of intensified settler colonialism. Michael McNally brought the “lived religion” approach helpfully to the study of Native Christianity. The path-breaking work of scholars working in Native American and Indigenous Studies such as Lisa Brooks and Christine Delucia, to name just two, have brought new methodologies to bear by engaging with descendant communities and Indigenous perspectives and raising important questions for all scholars of Native Christianity.

Hart is deeply engaged with this range of literature, and falls most squarely in the middle category, usefully deploying performance theory in order to limn a space between affiliation and practice, without presuming to comment on “what it really meant” to the individuals whose interior worlds we are not witness to. The advantage of looking at the performance of Christianity is two-fold: first, it emphasizes that performance by definition has an intended audience, and in this case, Mohawks performed Anglican Christianity as a means to forge and sustain relationships with a settler audience of priests, government officials and others in order in hopes of securing their future on their homelands. Secondly, performance also recognizes that ritual actions are not always and only the expression of an identity that already exists, but also a means of creating new identities – practicing and trying on elements of the proffered religion that fit with the understandings and aims of the community receiving the missionary message.

Hart’s focus on the performance of Christianity allows him to chart changes in the Mohawk engagement with Anglicanism across the decades and the changing dynamics of empire. While Hart’s final chapter crosses the national boundary, following the New York Mohawk communities into the Canadian diaspora, Hart misses out on an opportunity for additional insight that might have come from a brief comparison in the modes of Christian performance as enacted by the St. Lawrence Valley Mohawks affiliated with the Jesuits. What were the ongoing relations between the Anglican/British affiliated and French/Jesuit affiliated? How were those multiple borders navigated? Even if not a full blown comparative study, a more limited comparison would be helpful and, I expect, would provide further support for the insight to be gained through the focus on performance.

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***Justifying Revolution: The American Clergy’s Argument for Political Resistance, 1750–1776.* By Gary L. Steward. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021. 232 pp. \$74.00 cloth.**

Gary L. Steward in *Justifying Revolution: The American Clergy’s Argument for Political Resistance, 1750–1776*, challenges the conclusions of a number of scholars, including Mark Noll, Nathan Hatch, and George Marsden, who assert that America’s Protestant clergy embraced Enlightenment secularism and radical political philosophies in the lead up to the Declaration of Independence. They further claim that “a new