

Reviews

Race and New Religious Movements in the USA: A Documentary Reader. Edited by Emily Suzanne Clark and Brad Stoddard. Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. xii + 187 pages. \$81.00 cloth; \$26.96 paper; ebook available.

Recent scholarly monographs in the study of American religions have focused on the co-constitution of race and religion among various traditions. Contributing to this growing field of study, religion scholars Emily Suzanne Clark and Brad Stoddard have worked to carefully compile a set of primary source readings to pair with important classroom conversations. For the readers of *Race and New Religious Movements in the USA*, Clark and Stoddard helpfully deconstruct and contextualize the notions of religion and race, as some may assume that they are natural categories, to reveal the ways that European colonizers developed “religio-racial taxonomies” that assigned “heathen” and “pagan” to the identities of non-Western European cultures (5). The authors “seek to identify and highlight that the blending of religious and racial discourses is a persistent theme in American history” (6), even as they acknowledge that American history does not represent the only area where such discourses are present.

The book’s specific focus is “the larger, more influential, or more innovative social groups who taught and who believed that religio-racial theologies are essential aspects of their identities, paying particular attention to groups commonly designated new religious movements or emergent religions” (6). As Clark and Stoddard explain, we arrived at the American “blending of religious and racial discourses” due to “the unique combination of race-based slavery, immigration, a legal system sympathetic to religion, pervasive Protestantism, and the social construction of whiteness as a hegemonic discourse in the United States combined to create a particularly ripe environment for such *bricolage*” (1).

The reader covers a wide range of historical and contemporary religio-racial groups: the Code of Handsome Lake, Conjure, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Spiritualism, Ghost Dance Movement, Ku Klux Klan, Theosophy, Native American Church, Commandment Keepers, Moorish Science Temple of America, International Peace Mission Movement, Nation of Islam, Peoples Temple, Aryan Nations, the Nation of Yahweh, and Odinism. Arranged chronologically, each set of primary sources on a group has an editors’ introduction from Clark and Stoddard, which provides important dates, founders’ biographies, and explanations of terms. The book presents excerpts from sacred texts, doctrines,

speeches, records of rituals, memoirs of religious leaders and members, periodicals, and outsider perspectives—including state authorities, court decisions, FBI files, press coverage, and anthropologists' accounts—without grammatical alterations to the original documents. In their prose, these latter primary source perspectives also reveal racialized attitudes regarding the groups from those who opposed their growth. Importantly, the editors' introductions engage the relevant scholarship for each group; for example, including Yvonne Chireau's discussion of the problematic dichotomy between Christianity and Conjure in southern African American life (17–18). Additional reading lists follow each group's documents, and the book contains a bibliography and an index for additional research.

With *Race and New Religious Movements in the USA*, Clark and Stoddard have produced a novel and accessible documentary reader. It is well suited for introductory religion courses, courses that center the role of whiteness in the construction of “religion,” “lived religion” approaches to Christianity that observe its modification and adaptation in specific cultural contexts, and courses that center on alternative and emerging religious movements, where students will engage intersections of race and religion seriously through written sources. With illuminating primary source examples and carefully conceived editors' introductions, this volume also extends Judith Weisenfeld's “religio-racial” framework beyond the religious groups dominated by people of African descent in *New World A-Coming* (2016). *Race and New Religious Movements in the USA* collects religions whose leaders and adherents are Native American, Black, White, and/or multiracial, extracting these groups from their usual subfield silos in American religious studies and making them available for study across time, space, and place. And, like Weisenfeld, Clark and Stoddard present their audience with these religious documents descriptively as historians of religion. While they acknowledge and situate the groups that have histories of “hate” and violence that come with their religious advocacy of racial supremacy, they also appropriately transcend the commonplace, evaluative narrations of the controversial rhetoric and racial exclusivity that these groups receive when they attract mainstream attention.

Vaughn A. Booker, Dartmouth College

Religion, Law, USA. Edited by Joshua Dubler and Isaac Weiner. New York University Press, 2019. 336 pages. \$99.00 cloth; \$35.00 paper; ebook available.

Joshua Dubler and Isaac Weiner have edited a volume that takes a retrospective look at an “established and vibrant subfield” in