



Politics and Religion in the White South (Religion in the South)

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Politics, while always an integral part of the daily life in the South, took on a new level of importance after the Civil War. Today, political strategists view the South as an essential region to cultivate if political hopefuls are to have a chance of winning elections at the national level. Although operating within the context of a secular government, American politics is decidedly marked by a Christian influence. In the mostly Protestant South, religion and politics have long been nearly inextricable. Politics and Religion in the White South skillfully examines the powerful role that religious considerations and influence have played in American political discourse. This collection of thirteen essays from prominent historians and political scientists explores the intersection in the South of religion, politics, race relations, and southern culture from post-Civil War America to the present, when the Religious Right has exercised a profound impact on the course of politics in the region as well as the nation. The authors examine issues such as religious attitudes about race on the Jim Crow South; Billy Graham's influence on the civil rights movement; political activism and the Southern Baptist Convention; and Dorothy Tilly, a white Methodist woman, and her contributions as a civil rights reformer during the 1940s and 1950s. The volume also considers the issue of whether southerners felt it was their sacred duty to prevent American society from moving away from its Christian origins toward a new, secular identity and how this perceived God-given responsibility was reflected in the work of southern political and church leaders. By analyzing the vital relationship between religion and politics in the region where their connection is strongest and most evident, Politics and Religion in the White South offers insight into the conservatism of the South and the role that religion has played in maintaining its social and cultural traditionalism.



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