

Inspiration and Innovation: Religion in the American West

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ment backed up by a flow chart. Noting that “case studies illustrate and modulate the model by applying it to specific times and places” (130), the author then takes readers on a wild ride through stories of border manipulations, “Neanderthal politics” (185), and the varying influences of the locational choices of railroads and industry that shaped their histories. The general result was a “developmental delay” (203) that relegated most state capitals to middling places in the urban hierarchy. They became quiet administrative towns and “forgotten cities” (205) and acquired a negative image in the mid-twentieth century.

Since the 1950s, revitalized and expanding state governments with increasing state employment, new constitutions, political systems that limited corruption, and more access to federal grants helped dispel that image. Service businesses and high-tech industries followed, giving the cities a more professional, white-collar look. Even so, tourism remains underdeveloped, and most state capitals today remain in the middle of the urban hierarchy. Montès groups them into three types: modern state capitals, “seemingly unchanged capitals” (247) (including Des Moines), and second-rank capitals. After all this model building, the author again “validates” the model with three brief, fairly general, case studies of Columbus, Ohio; Des Moines, Iowa; and Frankfort, Kentucky. The model shows that although each city is unique, their histories indicate that each was integrated into and thus compelled to navigate the shifting patterns of national political, economic, and social development. A quick review of the efforts of former state capitals to find a niche in heritage and “small-town” tourism or another source of economic growth near a metropolis, seems to confirm this view. Iowa City, for example, became the home of the state university and in the 1970s restored its old state capitol as a historic site. And yet, in spite of the importance of economics and politics in explaining state capitals, the fact that state capitals maintain such a special place in American life suggests to the author that the “cultural approach” still matters. Careful and diligent readers will come away with a new and enhanced understanding of state capitals.

Inspiration and Innovation: Religion in the American West, by Todd M. Kerstetter. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015. xi, 275 pp. Map, illustrations, suggested reading lists, index. \$81.95 hardcover, \$26.95 paperback.

Reviewer Douglas Firth Anderson is professor emeritus of history at Northwestern College (Iowa) and coauthor of *Orange City* (2014).

Religion and Iowa have been intertwined since before Iowa became a state. Being “west” was also a part of Iowa’s identity for a while, al-

though not as long as religion has been. Of course, Iowa's religion and region have been dynamic and contested over time. Iowans' religious assumptions, sensibilities, activities, and institutions have cycled in expansion, contraction, and/or collision. Where Iowa was/is has also been in either or both of at least two places: West (of Old Man River), and the Middle West.

Todd M. Kerstetter's new history of religion in the American West, then, promises some perspective on and for Iowa's placement and religiosity. Kerstetter is a historian at Texas Christian University who has published before on religion in the American West. The book is the fourth volume in the publisher's Western History Series, a collection intended as college textbooks that are also more generally accessible. The prose in this volume is jargon-free, and the scholarly apparatus is minimized (the footnotes are few, and instead of a general bibliography, limited suggested readings—almost exclusively books—follow each chapter).

In a brief introduction the author concisely sets an interpretive framework for the volume. The book's subject is "the religious history of the trans-Mississippi United States" (1). Religion "inspired" the residents in and immigrants to the West, while "the region's historical development shaped religious innovations" (3). Kerstetter then tackles his subject in chronologically ordered chapters that critically narrate topics such as indigenous religions, European missions (Spain, France, and Russia), and Roman Catholic, Protestant, Mormon, Jewish, Asian, and other religious perspectives, developments, and institutions in the West. Contemporary material includes not only Branch Davidians but also megachurches, Hare Krishna (ISKCON), polygamous Mormons, the sanctuary movement, and the Native American Church.

The book is solidly done. Kerstetter provides an accessible narrative of the history of religion in the West that is filled with examples of the importance of religion in western lives as well as in social and cultural developments. Yet various things about the book undercut its potential. The publisher chose a cover illustration that is puzzling: George Caleb Bingham's *Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers through the Cumberland Gap*. Although Kerstetter does discuss the painting (90) as evidence of the intertwining of Manifest Destiny thinking and classic depictions of the Holy Family, it is neither of the trans-Mississippi West nor overtly religious. More substantively, Kerstetter inconsistently engages what the West as region encompasses. He says the book's region is the trans-Mississippi West, but he confesses that he does not feel he is in the West until he is somewhere well into Nebraska (2). While he recognizes that regional boundaries are fluid and that what

is “west” entails an “eastern” perspective, he nowhere engages with the Midwest region—does it overlap with the West? The recently rejuvenated Midwest studies movement was probably too recent for Kerstetter to take account of, but, there is no sign of his having read, for example, Philip Barlow’s case for a Midwest “Bible Suspender” of religious affiliation. (Indeed, it is puzzling that he did not seem to consult any of the five trans- or straddling-the-Mississippi volumes of AltaMira Press’s Religion by Region series, in one of which Barlow’s case appears. See “A Demographic Portrait: America Writ Small?” in *Religion and Public Life in the Midwest: America’s Common Denominator*, ed. Philip Barlow and Mark Silk [2004].)

Iowa makes no appearance in Kerstetter’s volume. He could have brought it in, say, with his discussion of Presbyterian home missionary Sheldon Jackson. He treats the important role Jackson played in territorial Alaska (116–17), but he could have noted the 1869 Sioux City Presbytery of Missouri River, which provided Jackson with the authority for his church-planting work around the West. Or, he might have considered discussing the Iowa-Oregon-California Quaker roots of Herbert Hoover. Or, he could have discussed Transcendental Meditation and its headquartering in Fairfield.

There are other problems. In coverage, his section “Modernism, Fundamentalism, and the Spirit of the West” (172–77) has no western examples of modernism. Also absent are the role of Judaism in Hollywood and Las Vegas and the importance of religion in the West in the rise of environmentalism (there is no mention of John Muir). In analysis, the theme of inspiration and innovation at times becomes a cookie-cutter “interpretation” in place of more nuanced reflection.

Kerstetter’s book, then, does not fully live up to its promise for western or Iowa religion. Still, the author has accomplished a great deal in synthesizing important developments and examples of religion in the American West.

Guaranteed Pure: The Moody Bible Institute, Business, and the Making of Modern Evangelicalism, by Timothy E. W. Gloege. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. xv, 307 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Bill R. Douglas recently retired from his role as a downtown carrier for the *Des Moines Register*, freeing him to concentrate on studying Iowa’s religious history.

Guaranteed Pure, along with Kevin Kruse’s *One Nation Under God*, may spark a new trend in American religious studies, combining business