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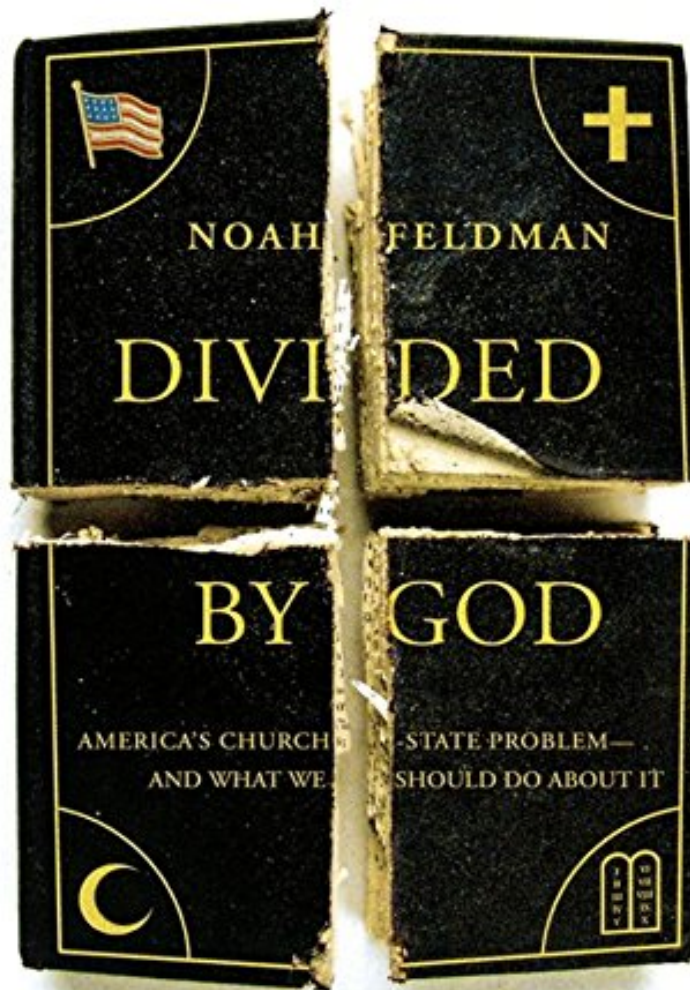
Divided by God: America's Church-State Problem--and What We Should Do About It

Noah Feldman

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#647785 in Books Noah Feldman 2006-06-27 2006-06-27 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x .71 x 5.501, .62 #File Name: 0374530386320 pages Divided by God America's Church State Problem and What We Should Do about It | File size: 74.Mb

Noah Feldman : Divided by God: America's Church-State Problem--and What We Should Do About It before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Divided by God: America's Church-State Problem--and What We Should Do About It:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A great book pointing out the fact this country is at a crisis point regarding separation of church and state
By katvilani
A great book that details the fact that details how we have always as a nation had to deal with crises dealing with religious groups with great political and social clout trying to marginalize those of minority faiths, this conflict has always been with us. But in the United States it has reached a crisis point with politicians who are hell bent on making this country into a Christian theocracy exerting more and more influence on the political process. this is driven by people who elect representatives who share their religious values, rather than representatives who value our secular form of government.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Worth pondering - 4.5 stars
By M. J. Keel
In "Divided By God" Noah Feldman examines the church state issue from the problem of state, and colony, sponsored churches faced by the Founding Fathers, traces the history of church state relations, and how the ideas of the Founding Fathers were interpreted, from then to now. At the end he poses a possible solution that is well worth considering. His scholarship is excellent, and his writing is thoroughly readable. Those who have strong secularist tendencies as well as those with strong religious convictions should read this "outside the box" and potential solution to a huge dividing factor in American political life today.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. ... well researched a must read for anyone wanting a better usa and a more peaceful planet
By AMA
clearly written ... well researched a must read for anyone wanting a better usa and a more peaceful planet. pluralism par excellence.

A brilliant and urgent appraisal of one of the most profound conflicts of our time
Even before George W. Bush gained reelection by wooing religiously devout "values voters," it was clear that church-state matters in the United States had reached a crisis. With *Divided by God*, Noah Feldman shows that the crisis is as old as this country--and looks to our nation's past to show how it might be resolved. Today more than ever, ours is a religiously diverse society: Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist as well as Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish. And yet more than ever, committed Christians are making themselves felt in politics and culture. What are the implications of this paradox? To answer this question, Feldman makes clear that again and again in our nation's history diversity has forced us to redraw the lines in the church-state divide. In vivid, dramatic chapters, he describes how we as a people have resolved conflicts over the Bible, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the teaching of evolution through appeals to shared values of liberty, equality, and freedom of conscience. And he proposes a brilliant solution to our current crisis, one that honors our religious diversity while respecting the long-held conviction that religion and state should not mix. *Divided by God* speaks to the headlines, even as it tells the story of a long-running conflict that has made the American people who we are.

.com
In *Divided By God*, Noah Feldman examines the unique, fascinating balance the United States has pursued for well over 200 years now -- the attempt at democratic government by the people in a country made up of many religions, and many highly religious people. The novel principle enshrined to help make this a success was strong separation of church from state. The strain on the system has never been greater as polarization grows over the many hot-button topics of our day. Feldman also observes how the stakes have been raised in the last 50 years as the forces of secularism have fought a largely successful battle to remove religious symbolism from the public sphere, while at the same time the growing tide of religious conservatism has managed to forge a surprisingly close church-state relationship through government funding of religious priorities (faith-based initiatives and school vouchers, for example.) Feldman, a law professor at New York University, delivers a timely book that attempts to move the discussion past rhetoric, by a careful examination of the history of church-state separation. The book's lively, conversational writing makes for a fascinating journey, starting with a precise analysis of exactly why our founding fathers debated and finally agreed to formally separate church and state, and then tracking the tests and challenges that separation has stood over the last two centuries. Perhaps the most refreshing current throughout is Feldman's lack of partisan bias, and his respect and understanding of the values, fears and goals that successive generations have brought to all sides of this never-ending debate. It is that lack of partisanship that makes his conclusion all the more powerful -- a call to move beyond a battlefield where the secular and religious forces aggressively pursue their own mutually exclusive goals, and instead to seek a deeper understanding of what values we all hold in common, and to recognize the importance of engaging in constructive debate in order to find and define that commonality together. --Ed Dobeas
From Publishers Weekly
Feldman, a legal rising star and author of *After Jihad* (a look at democracy and Islam), turns his attention to America's battle over law and religious values in this lucid and careful study. Those Feldman calls "legal secularists" want the state wholly cleansed of religion, while "values evangelicals" want American government to endorse the Christianity on which they say its authority rests. Feldman thinks both positions too narrow for America's tastes and needs. Much of his volume shows how those needs have changed. James Madison and his friends, Feldman writes, hoped to "protect religion from government, not the other way round." Debates in the 19th century focused on public schools, whose culture of "nonsectarian Christianity" (really Protestantism) created dilemmas for Catholics, and in the 20th century faced challenges from secularists and evangelicals the former won in the courts until very recently; the latter, often enough, won public opinion. Feldman proposes a compromise: that government "[allow] greater space for public manifestations of religion" while preventing government from linking

itself with "religious institutions" (by funding them, for example). The "values" controversy, as Feldman shows, concerns electoral clout, not just legal reasoning. His patient historical chapters will leave readers on all sides far more informed as matters like stem-cell research and the Supreme Court's forthcoming 10 Commandments decision take the headlines. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From The New Yorker Having examined Islam and democracy in his first book, "After Jihad," Feldman, a law professor at N.Y.U., turns his attention to America's own fraught religious-secular divide. Much of the book consists of an agile account of the evolution of church-state relations, from the creation of the First Amendment to the 2003 Supreme Court ruling against a public display of the Ten Commandments. Feldman identifies two polarized camps today: "values evangelicals," who uphold religious values as integral to political decisions, and "legal secularists," whose aim is to keep religion and government separate. He downplays the heterogeneity within these groups, perhaps in order to bolster his solution for reconciliation: sanctioning "public manifestations of religion," while withholding government funding from religious institutions. Copyright 2005 The New Yorker