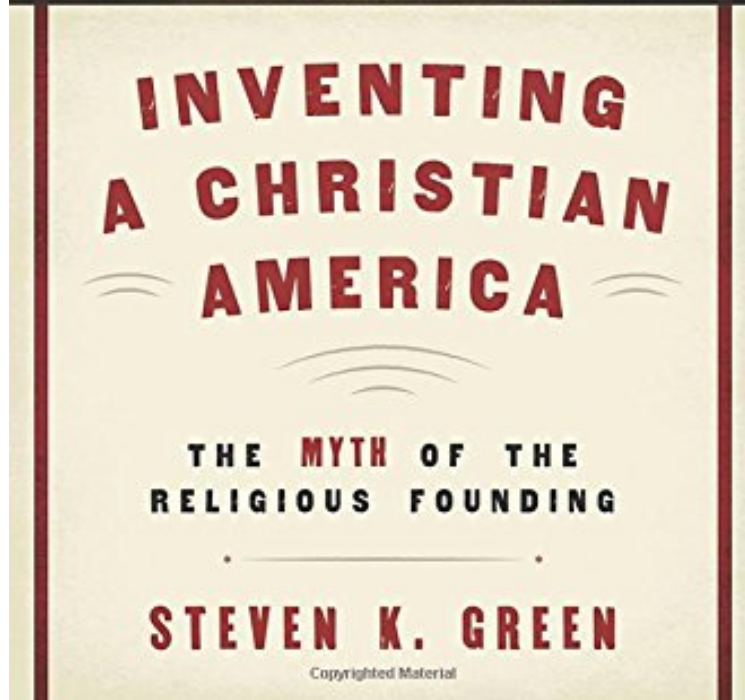
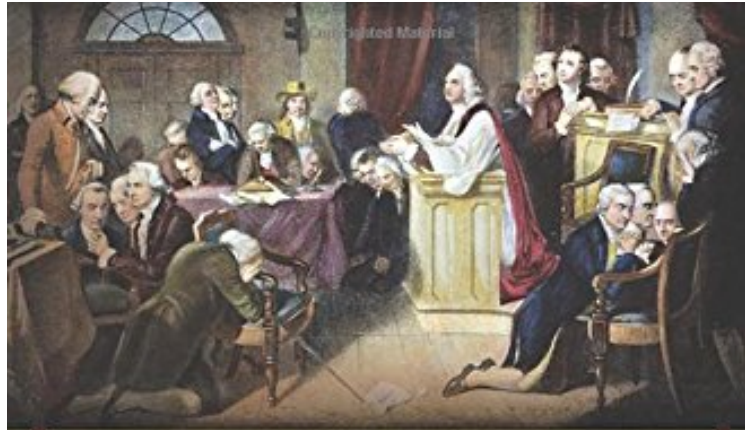


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Inventing a Christian America: The Myth of the Religious Founding

Steven K. Green

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Steven K. Green : Inventing a Christian America: The Myth of the Religious Founding before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Inventing a Christian America: The Myth of the Religious Founding:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Myths are not necessarily liesBy Anson Cassel MillsSteven K. Green, a law professor at Willamette University, and a former legal director and special counsel for Americans United

for Separation of Church and State, here disputes the notion that the United States was founded as a Christian nation, and he does so with scholarship that is both reasonable and comprehensive. Nevertheless, the book reminds me of a major problem of C. Vann Woodward's *Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1955), which argued that Jim Crow laws were not put in place immediately following the Civil War but were enacted later in the century. The thesis works well if you are a 20th-century professor focusing on legal records and archival documents. The thesis works less well if you are an African American entering a southern white restaurant in 1870. Green does well to conclude by reminding his readers that history is complicated. The evidence he himself presents is complicated enough. Add to that the understanding of the new nation that was carried in the hearts and minds of hundreds of thousands of ordinary 19th-century Americans, and the complexity grows. Myths are not necessarily lies. We don't have to endorse the inanities of Christian nationalists plucking quotations from the Founders out of context to believe that for practical purposes the American colonies and the early United States were indeed founded, at least roughly, on Christian principles.³ of 3 people found the following review helpful. Well Researched By Customer People on both sides of the debate of America's Christian roots are partly right and partly wrong. This book does a great job of unpacking the history and development of the American myth. There is a lot of revisionist history out there, but this book is a welcome corrective, helping us see that our American story, like many world cultures, makes the most sense when we see ourselves in the myth and its development. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Powerful and Insightful By Lawrence S. Newberry Excellent historical accounts and insights into this important aspect of American culture. A must read. Now more than ever now more than ever if you wish to understand the corporate chokehold on the social, political and religious lives of the American people.

Among the most enduring themes in American history is the idea that the United States was founded as a Christian nation. A pervasive narrative in everything from school textbooks to political commentary, it is central to the way in which many Americans perceive the historical legacy of their nation. Yet, as Steven K. Green shows in this illuminating new book, it is little more than a myth. In *Inventing a Christian America*, Green, a leading historian of religion and politics, explores the historical record that is purported to support the popular belief in America's religious founding and status as a Christian nation. He demonstrates that, like all myths, these claims are based on historical "facts" that have been colored by the interpretive narratives that have been imposed upon them. In tracing the evolution of these claims and the evidence levied in support of them from the founding of the New England colonies, through the American Revolution, and to the present day, he investigates how they became leading narratives in the country's collective identity. Three critical moments in American history shaped and continue to drive the myth of a Christian America: the Puritan founding of New England, the American Revolution and the forging of a new nation, and the early years of the nineteenth century, when a second generation of Americans sought to redefine and reconcile the memory of the founding to match their religious and patriotic aspirations. Seeking to shed light not only on the veracity of these ideas but on the reasons they endure, Green ultimately shows that the notion of America's religious founding is a myth not merely in the colloquial sense, but also in a deeper sense, as a shared story that gives deeper meaning to our collective national identity. Offering a fresh look at one of the most common and contested claims in American history, *Inventing a Christian America* is an enlightening read for anyone interested in the story of—and the debate over—America's founding.

"Green's book is admirably clear, disciplined, and short. It should be required reading for anyone trying to comprehend the perennial Christian America story." --Journal of American History "Steven Green's *Inventing a Christian America* is that rare book where scholarship and sensitivity can calm one of America's most volatile issues. Its breadth and fairness allow understanding and perspective to run ahead of simply inaccurate notions about America's 'Christian foundations.' The result is a marvelously readable account of the fascinating ways religious freedom actually emerged in America and uplifted nation and religion together." --Jon Butler, Howard R. Lamar Professor Emeritus of American Studies, History, and Religious Studies, Yale University "With impressive command of both historical and legal sources, Steven K. Green debunks the durable myth that the United States was founded as a Christian nation. At a time when Baptists have largely abandoned their historic task of patrolling the wall of separation, when Americans pine for what the author characterizes as 'a grand, and uncomplicated, story about the nation's beginnings,' *Inventing a Christian America* demonstrates that the myth of Christian origins was nineteenth-century invention. In a conversation that typically generates more heat than light, *Inventing a Christian America* stands out for both its irenic tone and its judicious scholarship." --Randall Balmer, author of *Redeemer: The Life of Jimmy Carter* "*Inventing a Christian America* is the most thorough critique of Christian nationalism available today. Steven Green approaches this controversial subject with scholarly insight, a generally irenic spirit, and a comprehensive analysis of the literature produced by those who defend the idea that the United States was founded as a Christian nation. Anyone interested in this subject must read this book." --John Fea, author of *Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?: A Historical Introduction* "Green helps retrace the steps of an enduring idea to the present day. Highly recommended." -- M.S. Hill, CHOICE About the Author Steven K. Green is Fred H. Paulus Professor of Law and Director of the Center for

Religion, Law, and Democracy at Willamette University. He is the author of *The Bible, the School, and the Constitution: The Clash that Shaped Modern Church-State Doctrine* and *The Second Disestablishment: Church and State in Nineteenth-Century America*.