

Religion has been a powerful political force throughout American history. When race enters the mix the results have been some of our greatest triumphs as a nation—and some of our most shameful failures. In this important book, Mark Noll, one of the most influential historians of American religion writing today, traces the explosive political effects of the religious intermingling with race.

Noll demonstrates how supporters and opponents of slavery and segregation drew equally on the Bible to justify the morality of their positions. He shows how a common evangelical heritage supported Jim Crow discrimination and contributed powerfully to the black theology of liberation preached by Martin Luther King Jr. In probing such connections, Noll takes readers from the 1830 slave revolt of Nat Turner through Reconstruction and the long Jim Crow era, from the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s to “values” voting in recent presidential elections. He argues that the greatest transformations in American political history, from the Civil War through the civil rights revolution and beyond, constitute an interconnected narrative in which opposing appeals to Biblical truth gave rise to often-contradictory

religious and moral complexities. And he shows how this heritage remains alive today in controversies surrounding stem-cell research and abortion as well as civil rights reform.

God and Race in American Politics is a panoramic history that reveals the profound role of religion in American political history and in American discourse on race and social justice.

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