Teaching African Religions at a Traditionally White Institution in the South

Ralph C. Watkins

Teaching “African American Religions” is an intense experience. Teaching the course calls on the teacher to observe the students changing as the students go through a transition during the course. This course has to be seen as a journey. It must be framed as a process of reunification and reconstruction. The teacher needs to feel compassion as he or she works in the community reconciling students to their roots as they explore the foundations of African American religiosity.

The Northern Kingdom in the Late Tenth-Ninth Centuries bce

NADAV NA’AMAN

A major problem in the discussion of the kingdom of Israel in the late tenth–ninth centuries is the evaluation of the Books of Kings as a source for historical reconstruction. In addition to Kings, there are some late tenth–ninth century Egyptian, Assyrian, Aramaic, and Moabite royal inscriptions that refer to various events in the history of the kingdom. However, the number and scope of these inscriptions are limited, and on their basis plus the archaeological data alone we would be unable to draw even a schematic history. The reconstruction of the early history of the Northern Kingdom must begin by tackling a major problem: that of the historicity of the United Monarchy. From the reigns of Jeroboam and Rehoboam on, the years of each king in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah
are accurately enumerated. In addition to the above, this chapter also looks at the early dynasties of the Northern Kingdom, including that of the Omrides, and Jehu's rebellion.

In Rough Country
Robert Wuthnow

This chapter focuses on a turbulent period in the late nineteenth century, as Texas was in the midst of one of the most important and hotly contested elections in its history. In compliance with an act of the U.S. Congress and by proclamation of President Ulysses S. Grant, the election ran from November 30 through December 3, 1869. It was held to determine whether the state would ratify a new constitution that complied with the Reconstruction laws of Congress and thus be reincorporated into the United States as a state in good standing. The situation was complicated by the murder of a well-respected businessman named B. W. Loveland. A witness claimed to have seen a black man in the vicinity of the store with what appeared to be bloodstains on his pants. Other witnesses claimed they had heard and seen nothing. Religion's place would be well illustrated both in the election itself and in the outcome of the Loveland murder investigation. Two members of the clergy in particular, one a white Methodist preacher and the other a black Baptist pastor, would quietly show the complex results that could occur when race and religion mingled with politics.

For the Advance of Civilization
Robert Wuthnow

This chapter examines the role of religion during the turbulent years of the Reconstruction. The election held in 1869 resulted in Texas approving a new constitution and being reincorporated into the United States in good standing. However, the outcome left many Texans unhappy, and a more enduring constitution was not approved until 1876.
Religion was expected to play an important supportive role in nearly all efforts at rebuilding, especially in encouraging morality, and yet this role was never quite as prominent or straightforward as might later be assumed. On the one hand, the seeds of what would later be called fundamentalism were certainly evident in the kind of revival preaching that left listeners scared for the mortal destiny of their souls. Such preaching was widely practiced in the prevailing Baptist and Methodist congregations. On the other hand, the kind of skepticism that earlier resulted in preachers being run out of town now found quieter expression in arguments favoring reticence in favor of dogmatism.

The Cross of Christ
Arnfríður Guðmundsdóttir

in Meeting God on the Cross: Feminist Christologies and the Theology of the Cross
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Item type: chapter

This chapter explores what it means for a feminist interpretation of the person and work of Christ to focus on the cross as the locus of our knowledge of God. Hence, the question: Is the cross of Christ a symbol of hope or a sign of oppression? Attempting a feminist reconstruction of a theology of the cross, it proposes a twofold purpose for this reconstruction: (1) to show the patriarchal distortion of traditional Christology and (2) to retrieve concealed dimensions in the classical interpretation of the person and work of Christ. It is argued that a theology of the cross can become an important hermeneutical tool when appropriated to unveil the distortion of patriarchal Christology. It can also help demonstrate how the cross of Christ provides an inherent critique of all abuse of power.

Rationalizing the Commandments II: Rationalizing the Commandments II: The Soloveitchikian Method
Daniel Rynhold

in Two Models of Jewish Philosophy: Justifying One's Practices
Published in print: 2005 Published Online: April 2005
DOI: 10.1093/019927486X.003.0003
Item type: chapter
The apparently contrasting method of rationalization of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik is subjected to a detailed critical analysis. Following a summary of Soloveitchik’s general method of descriptive reconstruction as presented in The Halakhic Mind, we first consider the scientific model of rationalization that Lawrence Kaplan finds within Soloveitchik’s reflections on halakhah. Despite humanistic and hermeneutic strands reminiscent of those found in the later thought of Wilhelm Dilthey, it is argued that ultimately this method remains a scientific explanatory method that attempts to subsume particular instances under general laws. There is, however, a contrasting model of rationalization found in The Halakhic Mind that is far more Gadamerian in tone, focusing on the meaning of the commandments rather than on their explanation. Some of the implications of the differences between the two models are discussed, though both models are argued to be highly conservative and lacking the capacity for objectivity.

The Resurrection of Jesus and Roman Catholic Fundamental Theology

Francis Schüssler Fiorenza

in The Resurrection: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Resurrection of Jesus

Published in print: 1998 Published Online: November 2003  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/0198269854.003.0009

Francis Schüssler Fiorenza develops a fundamental theological approach to Jesus’ resurrection that takes seriously the contemporary critique of foundationalism. He first discusses two different contemporary approaches within fundamental theology to the resurrection of Jesus: one emphasizing probability and combining internal and external reasons, the other focusing on the life of Jesus. After analysing two distinct genre of New Testament testimonies, hymnic material, and appearances narratives, he treats the importance and function of the testimony not only as an avenue of openness to transcendence, but also as a key for the interpretation of the New Testament texts. He concludes with reflections on the nature of metaphor, historical reconstruction, hermeneutical interpretation, and the relations between the object and ground of faith.
Secret Bodies
Hugh B. Urban

in The Economics of Ecstasy: Tantra, Secrecy and Power in Colonial Bengal
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Item type: chapter

The role of secrecy is looked at as a practical and ritual strategy. It is argued that the esoteric practices and ecstatic techniques of the Kartābhajās involve a key strategy of deconstructing and reconstructing the human body; their aim is to dismantle or dissolve the ordinary socialized body of the initiate, along with the conventional social hierarchy itself, and to create in its place a new, divinized (spiritualized) body, which is in turn reinscribed into an alternative social hierarchy, with its own relations of authority and power. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the relationship between the body and the social body in mainstream Bengali culture, as well as the ritual sacraments used to inscribe the physical body into the greater Bengali social hierarchy. Next, the role of initiation and bodily practice within the Kartābhajā tradition is discussed as it serves to deconstruct the conventional socialized body, and to create in its place an alternative, liberated body. Finally, an examination is made of the attempt of the Kartābhajās to construct not simply an alternative body, but an entire alternative identity or secret self – the “supreme” or ultimate identity, which is at once freed from the bonds of labor and servitude in the exoteric social hierarchy, while at the same time it is inscribed into a new hierarchy of power within the Kartābhajā sect itself.

Luminous Brotherhood
Emily Suzanne Clark

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Item type: book

In the midst of a nineteenth-century boom in spiritual experimentation, the Cercle Harmonique, a remarkable group of African-descended men, practiced Spiritualism in heavily Catholic New Orleans from just before the Civil War to the end of Reconstruction. In this first comprehensive history of the Cercle, Emily Suzanne Clark illuminates how highly diverse religious practices wind in significant ways through American life, culture, and history. Clark shows that the beliefs and practices of Spiritualism helped Afro-Creoles mediate the political and social changes
in New Orleans, as free blacks suffered increasingly restrictive laws and then met with violent resistance to suffrage and racial equality. Drawing on fascinating records of actual séance practices, the lives of the mediums, and larger city-wide and national contexts, Clark reveals how the messages that the Cercle received from the spirit world offered its members rich religious experiences as well as a forum for political activism inspired by republican ideals. Messages from departed souls including François Rabelais, Abraham Lincoln, John Brown, Robert E. Lee, Emanuel Swedenborg, and even Confucius discussed government structures, the moral progress of humanity, and equality. The Afro-Creole Spiritualists were encouraged to continue struggling for justice in a new world where “bright” spirits would replace raced bodies.

Christian Reconstruction
Michael McVicar

This is a critical history of Christian Reconstruction and its founder and champion, theologian and activist Rousas John Rushdoony (1916–2001). Drawing on access to Rushdoony’s personal papers and correspondence, this book demonstrates the role Reconstructionism played in the development of the radical Christian Right and an American theocratic agenda. As a religious movement, Reconstructionism aims at nothing less than “reconstructing” individuals through a form of Christian governance that, if implemented in the lives of U.S. citizens, would fundamentally alter the shape of American society.

Monsignor Testa’s Temple
Raymond Cohen

This chapter examines the reconstruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre commissioned in July 1938 by Archbishop Gustavo Testa. The plan involved the demolition of the entire Holy Sepulchre complex and construction of a grandiose edifice surrounded by a broad piazza. Testa's revisionist architectural vision was vehemently opposed in Catholic
circles. The reconstruction plan met various criticisms and it was also affected by the war.

American Evangelical Protestantism: Growth and Conflict (1860–1920)

Robert T. Handy

in A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada

This chapter provides a discussion on the growth and conflict of American Evangelical Protestantism during 1860–1920. It starts by introducing the Evangelical Protestantism of the Civil War and the period of Reconstruction. Topics covered include the expansion of black Protestantism, the evangelicals and their ‘Empire’, Sunday schools and public schools, Sabbath observance and temperance, theological tensions, evangelical dissenters, social Christianity, unitive trends, and the war to end all wars. The main themes of the movement brought together the evangelistic, missionary, co-operative, and social concerns of the Anglo-American churches. Though the Civil and Spanish-American wars had been faced in a crusading spirit by the churches, many Christians supported the burgeoning peace movement in the buoyant, optimistic opening years of the new century. Evangelical styles had been evolving over a long period of time, and as a new era opened following the successful completion of the war the methods that had been developed seemed full of promise. The problems ahead seemed surmountable and were being faced in a confident, optimistic spirit.

Contested Meanings and Definitional Boundaries: Historicizing the Sociology of Religion

Meredith B. McGuire

in Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life

This chapter examines the nature of religion and religiosity in Europe before the Reformation era. It analyzes four specific issues that are important for understanding what scholars believe is definitive of real religion and religious action. These include the location of the sacred,
the nature of divine power, the focus of individual religious expression and the purity and authenticity of religious tradition and group identity. It suggests that these issues constitute a social reconstruction and they are the result of human struggles over cultural resources and power.

Rocking Daniel
Joshua Guthman

in Strangers Below: Primitive Baptists and American Culture
Published in print: 2015 Published Online: May 2016
DOI: 10.5149/northcarolina/9781469624860.003.0005
Item type: chapter

This chapter follows African American Primitives from emancipation through the founding of the National Primitive Baptist Convention in 1907. It is a journey that has almost entirely escaped notice, even though its burdens and aspirations reveals something new about African Americans, Calvinism's complex fate, and the religious reconstruction of the post-Civil War South. In the decades after the Civil War, Black Primitives built an education movement grounded in what they described as their “hard-shell” Calvinist identity: rugged yet flexible, durable yet capable of adaptation. These black Primitives floated a new kind of Primitive-ness, a new kind of American Calvinism—born in slavery, reborn in freedom, and then reconceived in the twilight between Reconstruction and Jim Crow as an educational movement that moved nimbly between black Calvinist sectarianism and optimistic ecumenism.

The Native Ministry in the United States
Jay Riley Case

in An Unpredictable Gospel: American Evangelicals and World Christianity, 1812-1920
Published in print: 2012 Published Online: May 2012
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199772322.003.0004
Item type: chapter

Karen Christianity fueled a debate among American Baptists over the foundations of evangelicalism. Leaders such as Francis Wayland argued that evangelicalism grew from democratization and primitivism, a position that led him to argue for the Three-Self Theory and a deemphasis on education in evangelism. Meanwhile, leaders such as Barnas Sears argued that evangelicalism grew from the guidance of highly educated leaders. The resulting Baptist missionary ideal,
embodied in the concept of the native ministry, drew from both theories. When the Civil War broke out, the native-ministry ideal led Baptists and similar evangelical denominations to missionary work among freed people in the American south. The native-ministry faith in the ability of nonwhite Christian leaders led northern Baptists to establish institutions of higher education for African Americans in the Reconstruction south.

The Human Person in Iqbal’s Thought
Ebrahim Moosa

in Muhammad Iqbal: Essays on the Reconstruction of Modern Muslim Thought
Published in print: 2015 Published Online: September 2017 Publisher: Edinburgh University Press
DOI: 10.3366/edinburgh/9780748695416.003.0002
Item type: chapter

This chapter examines the philosophical anthropology of Muhammad Iqbal’s theory of khudi (selfhood or personhood). Asserting that this is Iqbal’s greatest contribution to philosophy, it shows how Iqbal rehabilitated the concept and used it as the source of inspiration for the social reconstruction of Muslim society. Stripped of its selfish egotism, and rooted in Iqbal’s epistemological metaphysics of intuition, khudi now becomes a positive signifier for a renewed identity for the individual and also the impetus for a creative revolution in the world. Indeed, in Iqbal's understanding, selfhood only triumphs through love of the divine, and when selfhood is realised then it becomes equal to the resurrection of humankind.

Houses Divided
Lucas P. Volkman

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Item type: book

This work argues that congregational and local denominational schisms among Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians in the border state of Missouri before, during, and after the Civil War were central to the crisis of the Union, Civil War, and Reconstruction. Employing an array of approaches that examine these ecclesiastical fractures beyond the customary antebellum temporal scope of analysis, and as a local phenomenon, this study maintains that the schisms were interlinked religious, sociocultural, legal, and political developments rife with implications for the transformation of evangelicalism and the United States in that period and to the end of Reconstruction. The evangelical
disruptions in Missouri were grounded in divergent moral and political understandings of slavery, abolitionism, secession, and disloyalty. Publicly articulated by factional litigation over church property and a combative evangelical print culture, the schisms were complicated by race, class, and gender dynamics that arrayed the contending interests of white middle-class women and men, rural churchgoers, and African American congregants. These ruptures forged antagonistic northern and southern evangelical worldviews that increased antebellum sectarian strife and violence, energized the notorious guerrilla conflict that gripped Missouri through the Civil War, and fueled postwar vigilantism between opponents and proponents of emancipation. As such, the schisms produced the intertwined religious, legal, and constitutional controversies that shaped pro- and antislavery evangelical contention before 1861, wartime Radical rule, and the rise and fall of Reconstruction.

The Crisis of the Nation
Christopher Z. Hobson


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Item type: chapter

Prophetic thinkers disputed whether the nation could ever overcome its sin of oppression. These differences affected agendas for change and debates over emigration. The majority, reflecting redemptive strands in biblical prophecy, foresaw a bright if distant future within the United States and oriented their congregants to a generations-long struggle for equality.

The Stone Cut Out of the Mountain
Christopher Z. Hobson


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Item type: chapter

Millennial and apocalyptic traditions in prophecy cross-fertilize the broader reformatory tradition. The chapter examines end-time prophecies including forecasts of race greatness and a contrasting nonracial universalism; reconstructs and analyzes John Jasper’s famed
“Sun” and less-known “Stone Cut Out of the Mountain” sermons; and discusses parallel uses by major reformatory prophets.

Conclusion

Christopher Z. Hobson


African American prophecy has provided a means of flaying an unjust society, altered the meaning of Christianity, and shown that religion need not respect the status quo. But is it more than a proud legacy? Today’s conditions challenge African American prophecy’s achievements and test its ideas as never before.