

would assume that the Torah could speak directly to their situation. Few Jewish writers of the time were interested in what Isaiah or David really meant. Scripture did not belong to the past, but to the ever-changing present. The essays in the book demonstrate that the writers of the NT followed the same hermeneutic.

Sanders goes on to argue that conservative Christians today derive their hermeneutic from the examples in the Bible. Early Christians put the Prophets rather than the Writings last because they believed that the prophets foretold Christ, that they spoke directly to the situation first-century Christians found themselves in. Following this model today, conservative Christians tend to make creative use of the Scriptures to address social, political, and theological issues of current interest.

This leads Sanders to the probing question: "In what sense, then, can modern critical scholarship speak of the New Testament as the fulfillment of the Old" (256)? Sanders argues in response that modern scholarship serves as a constraint on adapting Scripture to say whatever anyone thinks it ought to say to believing communities today. Whether the viewpoint in question is liberal or conservative, it needs to be subjected to a critical reading of the Bible as a constraining factor in the discernment of its abiding truth. Its relevance for today must derive from a faithful and natural extension of what it originally meant.

In conclusion, it seems to me that devotional and creative readings of Scripture will always be the norm in most churches and synagogues. Such readings should not be discouraged as long as they build up individuals and the community in positive ways. But when the community becomes divided by interpretations of the Scriptures, the scholarly role of exegetical reading is a necessary arbiter to make sure that all players in the discussion are on the same page. Scripture was and is adaptable for life. But scholarship can play a healthy role in guiding such adaptation to the benefit of believing communities.

Andrews University

JON PAULIEN

Gaustad, Edwin S. *Faith of the Founders: Religion and the New Nation, 1776-1826*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2004. 196 pp. Paper, \$24.95.

The increasing influence of the Religious Right on American politics in recent elections and their attempts to break down the wall between religion and politics has created a need among Americans to reexamine the religious traditions of the American nation. This book has helped to answer some of the questions raised by the Religious Right about the role of religion in the formation of the nation. The focus of this book is to examine the faith of the Founding Fathers, namely Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and John Adams during the period 1776 to 1826.

The author, an Emeritus Professor of History at the University of California, Riverside, identifies seven varying perspectives that guided these men. He points out that although some of these perspectives were sometimes contrary, they were not necessarily contradictory. Some were held in creative tension, while others were seen as absolute dichotomies that ruled out neutrality. They all required decisions, judgment, and firm conviction, with the remarkable outcome that American religious life was affirmed and shaped for centuries without the spilling of blood or religious wars that were a common feature of the European landscape.

The first perspective was to view religion as an instrument of establishment and social order. The Founding Fathers viewed God's people as having the task of rescuing humanity from natural brutishness and anarchical selfishness. For them religion created order and stability

The second perspective was like a muted counterpart to the first, for they affirmed

dissent and personal piety in the face of the majoritarian view of religion and its societal priorities. Religion had more to do with the human heart than with councils of state. Its core principles deal primarily with convictions of the heart.

The third perspective proclaimed the inseparable nature of political liberty and religious liberty. This was a revolutionary idea. In the past, civil and ecclesiastical tyranny had traveled side by side, reinforcing each other; but now Americans were simultaneously fighting for liberty on both the political and religious fronts.

The fourth perspective was civil religion and national unity. Although the American people did not choose one religion over any other, they saw themselves as a religious people carrying out a divine mandate similar to that of the chosen Israel of old. This placed them under divine authority and judgment, and they were sustained by divine power.

The fifth perspective was that the religion of the nation must be reasonable and, therefore, devoid of mystery and irrational dogmatism. "It must be a religion worthy of a free nation, a religion emancipated from knavery and deceptions of the past" (8).

The sixth perspective would counterbalance the fifth by arguing that while religion must be reasonable it should steer clear of the excesses of the French Revolution. Anthropology must not replace theology. God must still be acknowledged as our Creator and must be accorded his rightful place in our lives.

The seventh perspective was to use religion as an instrument of vitality in the community. It would act as a civilizing force to banish barbarianism, ignorance, and irreligion. It would inspire the nation with confidence, a purpose and godliness by providing education, establishing schools and colleges, dispatching missionaries, elevating morals, and leading out in reforms.

Contrary to what the Religious Right proclaimed about the simplicity of the nation's religious past, what we encounter is profound complexity. There is confidence in the power of a social order, in the power of personal piety, in religious liberty and the limitless potential of the nation, the reforming potency of reason, the enduring place of divine transcendence and the prophetic voice of vital religion.

Both Thomas Jefferson and James Madison understood much of the bloody history of Europe in terms of how despotic religion had shed the blood of countless thousands: neither wanted anything like this in the new nation they were forming. Madison argued "that generals nor politicians have the right or authority much less the wisdom to be the judge of religious truth" (40). Jefferson would support Madison's position by proclaiming that "Religion had historically been a major means for shackling human minds, not emancipating them. But that age of human history now belonged to the past, along with all the hypocrisy and meanness that had accompanied government bribery and ecclesiastical coercion" (41).

Gaustad quoted Jefferson as saying:

If an all-wise and all-powerful God restrained himself from coercing either the bodies or the minds of men and women, how utterly absurd it must then be for "fallible and uninspired men" to assume "dominion over the faith of others." In this new enlightened age we must recognize "that our civil rights have no dependence upon our religious opinions, any more than our opinions in physics or geometry." Above all else we must have the confidence, the courage, to affirm "that truth is great and will prevail if left to herself, that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict . . . errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them" (41).

Although Franklin confessed that theology was not his keenest concern, when pressed about his convictions he had this to say:

Here is my Creed. I believe in one God, Creator of the Universe: That he governs the World by his Providence. That he ought to be worshiped. That the most acceptable Service we can render to him is doing good to his other Children. That the Soul of Man is immortal, and will be treated with Justice in another Life, respecting its Conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental principles of all sound Religion, and I regard them as you do, in whatever Sect I meet with them (65).

As a practicing Deist he could not countenance any liaison between religion and politics. For him religion was a useful instrument for the betterment of society.

No other Founding Father has been more canonized than George Washington, yet he was a man given to little religiosity. In 1795, he wrote: "In politics as in religion my tenants [*sic*] are few and simple" (76). He used the language of faith and often praised the Grand Architect of the universe. There were other allusions to God, such as "the Governor of the universe," "Higher Cause," "Great Ruler of Events," "Wise Creator," and "Supreme Dispenser of all Good" (77). He saw the hand of Providence in the formation of the American nation, but he scrupulously avoided the endorsement of any religion. In 1789, when some Presbyterian elders protested to Washington that the Constitution lacked any explicit recognition of the only true God and Jesus Christ, the new president calmly replied that the "path of true piety is so plain as to require little political direction" (78).

Edwin Gaustad has proven conclusively that while the Founding Fathers were deeply religious and understood the religious character of the American nation, they all steadfastly opposed any kind of state religion for the nation. They refrained from endorsing publicly any religious group. They all remembered Europe's bloody past when the church and state were united, and they wanted an American nation where church and state were separate. They were not asking that religion be excluded from public discourse or from the arena of public conduct, but that the state, the political arm of the country, stay clear of any kind of alliance with any religious group.

This book is a must-read for those who want to understand American religious roots and the role of religion in the formation of the American nation, as well as for those who want to be aware of the views of the Founding Fathers regarding the relationship of religion and state.

Andrews University

TREVOR O'REGGIO

Kalimi, Isaac. *The Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History in Chronicles*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, Inc., 2005. xiii + 473 pp. Hardcover, \$44.50.

This book is an expanded revision of the author's earlier work published in Hebrew (*The Book of Chronicles: Historical Writing and Literary Devices* [Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 2000]), which was itself an expanded revision of an earlier German work (*Geschichtsschreibung des Chronisten* [Berlin: deGruyter, 1995]). In it, Kalimi deals with the parallels between Chronicles and other passages in the Hebrew Bible, i.e., what he calls "an extensive and enlightening example of a later biblical author's editing and adaptation of earlier literary-historiographical sources available to him" (1). He attempts to identify the forms and techniques employed by the Chronicler in his adaptations of Samuel-Kings incorporated into Chronicles.

In his introduction, Kalimi discusses the two different approaches developed in the nineteenth century regarding the Chronicler's use of sources, i.e., either that the Chronicler used and modified Samuel-Kings or that both used a common source. He sides with the first view, but does not rule out textual differences in the source text available to the author