2016

Utter's "The Religious Right: A reference handbook" (Book Review)

Armand T. Ternak
Toccoa Falls College

The Christian Librarian is the official publication of the Association of Christian Librarians (ACL). To learn more about ACL and its products and services please visit http://www.acl.org/

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl

Part of the American Politics Commons, and the Christianity Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl/vol59/iss2/50

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Christian Librarian by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.

Anyone who has children will be able to relate to the humorous pictures in the book *Parenting is easy: You’re just doing it wrong*. The idea for this book came from author Sara Given who found the stock images of parents and children and the idea of motherhood to be a joke. She soon launched a Tumblr that offer parenting flops and funny kid moments that show the reality and not the fantasy of what all parents hope life with their children will be. In her 176 page book, there are pictures of the stock photos of women smiling with their perfectly round exposed bellies, the joys of the delivery room, toddlers happily eating their vegetables, families enjoying games around a laptop and more. Along with each picture, there is a caption with sarcastic and funny comments that are sure to bring moments of sudden outbursts and polite chuckles when flipping through the pages. One of the best images shows a mother on the phone, conducting business on her computer and holding her non-fussy child on her lap with a smile. Part of the caption reads “I am getting so much work done.” Anyone who is a parent or has babysat would agree that the child would be more apt to bang on the keyboard and whine for lack of attention than to sit quietly with understanding that the mother has work to do. This humorous book of images is a quick read for anyone who wants to take a break for the seriousness of the day. While you do not have to be a parent to understand the pictures and quotes, having been through the experience makes the content a little more relatable. Highly enjoyable for those who want to escape the perfect world of stock images and imagine what the parent and child are thinking while holding their perfect poses.

**Reviewer**

Cynorra Jackson, Friends University


This is a library quality hardbound reference book. The cover design is very clever showing a street sign at the corner of Church Street and State Avenue along with some religious and political photos. This is pleasurable reading if your political persuasion is right, and likely upsetting if your political persuasion is left. In spite of the works perspective, it is balanced with some pleasure and some frustration. What I am wondering is how come so few people write about the harmful political involvement of the Non-Religious Left? It seems to me that all good governments need good, moral, honest, trustworthy, loving, truthful, peaceful, kind, generous, gentle and yes, religious, people for them to function properly. What we really need
is separating evil, immoral, dishonest, non-trustworthy, hateful, lying, contentious, un-kind, greedy, cruel people from government? Can non-religious people really have consistently “good” morals? Based on what criteria?

In the thirty-two-page introductory chapter, the authors emphasize that the religious right has had a broad moral impact in America since the founding of the nation. The anti-slavery movement, the right to vote, prohibition, social welfare, anti-communism, civil rights, creationism, anti-abortion, and anti-pornography, are just a few examples. Chapter 2, the 40-page Chronology only covers from 1835 – July 2006 and mostly includes examples of religion affecting politics and law and the media. Chapter 3, the 77 page biographical profiles, includes mostly one page biographies (sometimes with a black and white photo) of 54 of the major religious conservatives influencing the nation. Chapter 4, entitled, “Analysis of Survey Data,” uses 25 pages with 16 tables from the National Opinion Research Center and a 2006 Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion to help understand the religious right’s theological beliefs, political preferences, policy preferences, and social and moral values. Chapter 5, has 129 pages which consist of 26 primary documents and quotes covering all the “hot button” issues in brief articles or important quotes and divided into two sections: “Religious Right Views” and “Commentary on the Religious Right.” Chapter 6, the 36-page directory of organizations includes 62 supportive groups and 11 critical ones giving half page overviews of these important organizations, including contact information, publications, and history. The main organizations critical of the religious right are also listed. Chapter 7, entitled, “Suggested Readings” has 98 pages, including readings from 1862 to 2006 and is divided into 3 sections: “Works About the Religious Right” (subheadings are: Biographies, Religious Studies, Politics); “Works from the Religious Right” (subheadings are: Worldview, Political and Economic Issues, Personal and Family Topics, Millenarianism) and “Periodicals from Religious Right Organizations.” This section provides an annotation for each of the works listed. Chapter 8, entitled, “Selected Multimedia Resources,” covers 68 pages divided into 8 sections of: Multiple Formats, DVDs, Videotapes, Audiotapes, Audio CD’s, CD-ROMs, Radio and TV Programs, Internet Resources. The very helpful glossary covers 47 theological and religious terms that the average American may not know. This work concludes with a useful, but small, print index.

Each chapter has useful information but is not comprehensive and can use updating into a subsequent edition. This book is definitely recommended for all Public and Academic Libraries. It is highly recommended for those seeking to understand the religious right’s role in American society and politics.

**Reviewer**

Armand T. Ternak, Toccoa Falls College