bibliography was a timely decision and a very good tribute to his distinguished career in the history of science. Pingree published thirty-two books and monographs between 1968 and 2002. He contributed forty-eight chapters to edited works, wrote eighty-three articles in various journals, and, in addition, contributed several highly original articles in various encyclopaedias and book reviews. His mastery of Greek, Latin, Arabic, Akkadian, and Sanskrit was a rare accomplishment. Studies in the History of the Exact Sciences in Honour of David Pingree extends our understanding of the scientific traditions studied by the contributors as well as of the general intellectual currents in the civilizations in which these sciences flourish.

Muzaffar Iqbal


The author believes it is imperative that programs in Western studies be established in the Muslim world so that Muslims will have a better understanding of Western countries and be better able to influence public opinion in those countries. His book is meant to be, and is, a useful reference tool for such programmes.

The book’s subtitle gives a more accurate understanding of the subject matter: “The Rise of Christian Evangelists and Their Impact.” Readers will learn little about Catholicism or liberal Protestantism or other minority faiths in the United States. What strikes the author is that George W. Bush won presidential elections in 2000 and 2004 despite economic conditions that seemed to favour Democratic candidates. He ascribes Bush’s victories to the power of Christian fundamentalists.

The author briefly discusses the Protestant reformers, Martin Luther (d. 1546) and John Calvin (d. 1564), then the Puritans, who settled New England and who continue to be an inspiration for Christian fundamentalists, and then the conservative break with liberal Protestantism as the United States modernized at the end of the nineteenth century. A movement labelled
“fundamentalist” emerged out of the rejection of the liberal attempt to accommodate modernity. The name derived from a list of beliefs that were considered fundamentals of the faith and which, therefore, all true Christians must accept unequivocally.

Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the changes taking place within the fundamentalist movement in the decades following the Second World War. Helped by the popularity of the evangelist, Billy Graham, and the establishment of their own schools, the movement became more respectable. At the same time, many fundamentalists became politicized by court decisions banning Christian prayer in public schools and legalizing some abortions. These changes encouraged conservative politicians to build coalitions with the fundamentalists. Thus was born the current Republican Party that combines cut taxes/small government political conservatives and the religious fundamentalists, especially those who were part of the Moral Majority movement. The author discusses the significance of this coalition in electing Ronald Reagan (in 1980 and 1984) and George W. Bush (in 1988).

This is a small book about a big subject. The roughly one-third of the American population that composes conservative Protestantism is more varied than one would think from reading this book; especially significant is the importance of the growing middle-class segment of the conservative religious movement which is less radical. While the author discusses the role of the Moral Majority during the 1980s, he does not explain the demise of the movement. During the 1990s, the major conservative Protestant political movement was the Christian Coalition; however it is now in decline; unfortunately this organization is not considered in the book under review.

The author’s desire to contribute to the establishment of new research centers in the Muslim world is certainly worthy of admiration. Hopefully those who read his book will be motivated to explore further the complex make-up of American Christianity and its political role.

Joseph B. Tamney

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