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Religious Studies in Ontario: A State-of-the-Art-Review

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As well, this stands out with the attention he gives to the inconsequential Cercle Proudhon. Finally, he states that his data upholds the "neither left, nor right" contentions of Zeev Sternhell and his disciples. This seems to claim too much from too little. Certainly his *mystique/politique* polarity, borrowed from Péguy, is useful in comprehending a tiny, volatile élite like the youthful, bourgeois, *engagés* Catholics of this period, but it does not undermine the usefulness of left-right categories for understanding organizations and movements.

These few weaknesses do not destroy the value of the book. It is a strong first effort by a scholar who will leave his mark in the years to come.

Oscar L. Cole Arnal
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Religious Studies in Ontario: A State of the Art Review

Harold Remus, William Closson James and Daniel Fraikin
Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1992
422 pp. \$24.95

This book tells a part of the story of a major change which has taken place in Canadian higher education since 1960: the study of religion emerging as an accepted academic discipline in the secular university. The most tangible form this took was the establishment of religious studies departments or departments of religion in virtually every Canadian university.

Since Ontario is the largest of the provinces and has the most varied and the largest number of faculty members working in the field, this book is important. As part of a series of studies on the state of the art of religious studies in Canada, it deserves careful reading, especially by members of the clergy and theological educators.

The plan of the book is to review all of the religious studies programmes in Ontario and to draw up a composite profile of the state of the art of doing religious studies in Ontario thirty years after religious studies left her status as "queen" in the university or the sheltered environment of the theological college and moved into the academy as servant. The three authors are all respected scholars and teachers, two in the area of scripture studies and one in the area of religion and literature. They also demonstrate that they have a very pleasant and clear writing style. They cover all the topics: overview of Religion and Religious Studies in Ontario, the perceptions of administrators, faculty and students (Remus); the preparation and hiring, teaching and research of faculty (Closson James), both graduate and undergraduate curricula (Fraikin), libraries, databases and even the Bible Colleges (Remus). In addition there is a fine section on conclusions and recommendations as well as rich appendices and tables.

The authors are sensitive to the problems of the modern university and are aware that faculty in the field of religion have been as much part of the problem as of the solution. That applies to questions of equity, greed, sexual harassment, and pomposity and especially infighting (see 318-321). On all of these they have some very important things to say. Nor do they hesitate to prognosticate the future and obviously before Social Contract days still assume there is one.

Gone are the days when members of churches went off to university to avoid religion. It is now possible to study religion as an academic discipline in university and show no particular interest in "practising" the religion of one's ancestors. Indeed one can be extremely keen on doing so without showing a shred of interest in going to church.

They suggest that "clergy who, while in seminary, had no time for religious studies may want the kind of instruction offered in religious studies and turn there for help in understanding and living in our pluralistic, secular society" (321). Words well worth heeding!

It is a pleasure to read a book which has a joyous undertone (318), is very carefully edited and proof-read; in short, one that performs a genuine service for the discipline. The writers and the press, above all the Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, are to be congratulated for this fine piece of work. It deserves wide reading certainly by everyone interested in the impact of religion on life.

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Initiation Into Christ: Ecumenical Reflections and Common Teachings on Preparation for Baptism

Canadian Council of Churches

Winfield, BC: Wood Lake Books, and Ottawa: Novalis Press, 1992

50 pp. \$7.50

For those who have taken the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada's *Statement on Sacramental Practices* seriously, especially the parts which speak about the ecumenical nature of the church's beliefs on Holy Baptism and the Eucharist, and who are looking for a teaching tool which focuses on this ecumenicity, this may be the book for you. Sponsored by the Commission on Faith and Order of the Canadian Council of Churches and in preparation for over fifteen years, it comes as a breath of fresh air in this time of "ecumenical winter".

The book intends to provide a common teaching tool for churches which agree on the recognition of one another's processes of initiation. The format is clear and the approach is inductive, each of the five chapters beginning with "reflections on human experience" and going on to "the biblical