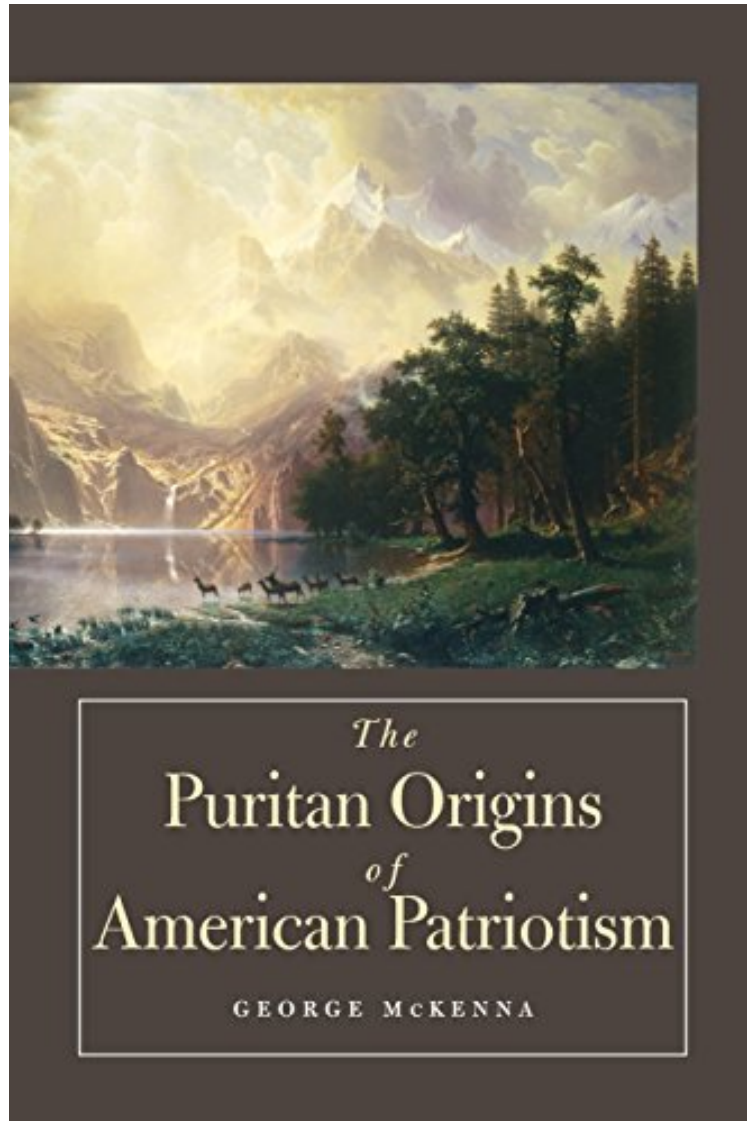


[FREE] The Puritan Origins of American Patriotism

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George McKenna : The Puritan Origins of American Patriotism before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Puritan Origins of American Patriotism:

11 of 17 people found the following review helpful. This Could Have Been a Much Better BookBy David SouthworthI really wanted to give this impressive book by George McKenna a better rating. He is an expert on religion in American life and history. This is obvious. But way too often the author seems to let personal bias and political bugaboos get in the way of what could have been a great straight history.First: the good parts. McKenna's retelling of

early American politics and the role religion played is top notch. From the Anne Hutchinson trial to the role of religion in the pre-Civil War abolition movement and in the life of Abraham Lincoln were superb. However, as the closer the author gets to the modern day the more he seems hell bound to interject politics into his telling of history. He goes on far too many tangents that don't seem germane to his history. The Hiss/Chambers account and the many political movements that sprung up in the 1960s and 70s top the list of rants that detract from the overall history. A better editor with an ability to keep the author focused, and an author more interested in recounting history and leaving his personal bugaboos out would have made this much better than it currently is.

In this absorbing book, George McKenna ranges across the entire panorama of American history to track the development of American patriotism. That patriotism shaped by Reformation Protestantism and imbued with the American Puritan belief in a providential errand has evolved over 350 years and influenced American political culture in both positive and negative ways, McKenna shows. The germ of the patriotism, an activist theology that stressed collective rather than individual salvation, began in the late 1630s in New England and traveled across the continent, eventually becoming a national phenomenon. Today, American patriotism still reflects its origins in the seventeenth century. By encouraging cohesion in a nation of diverse peoples and inspiring social reform, American patriotism has sometimes been a force for good. But the book also uncovers a darker side of the nation's patriotism: a prejudice against the South in the nineteenth century, for example, and a tendency toward nativism and anti-Catholicism. Ironically, a great reversal has occurred, and today the most fervent believers in the Puritan narrative are the former outsiders: Catholics and Southerners. McKenna offers an interesting new perspective on patriotism's role throughout American history, and he concludes with trenchant thoughts on its role in the post-9/11 era.

"How America's sense of national identity was formed is a fascinating question, and George McKenna goes a long way towards answering it. In this wide-ranging, deeply researched and at times revelatory book, he shows how Puritan ideas and values spread across the country from New England in the 1630s and came to define a distinctly American patriotism." John Gray, FT Magazine

About the Author: George McKenna is professor emeritus, City College of the City University of New York, where he taught American government and American political thought for forty years.