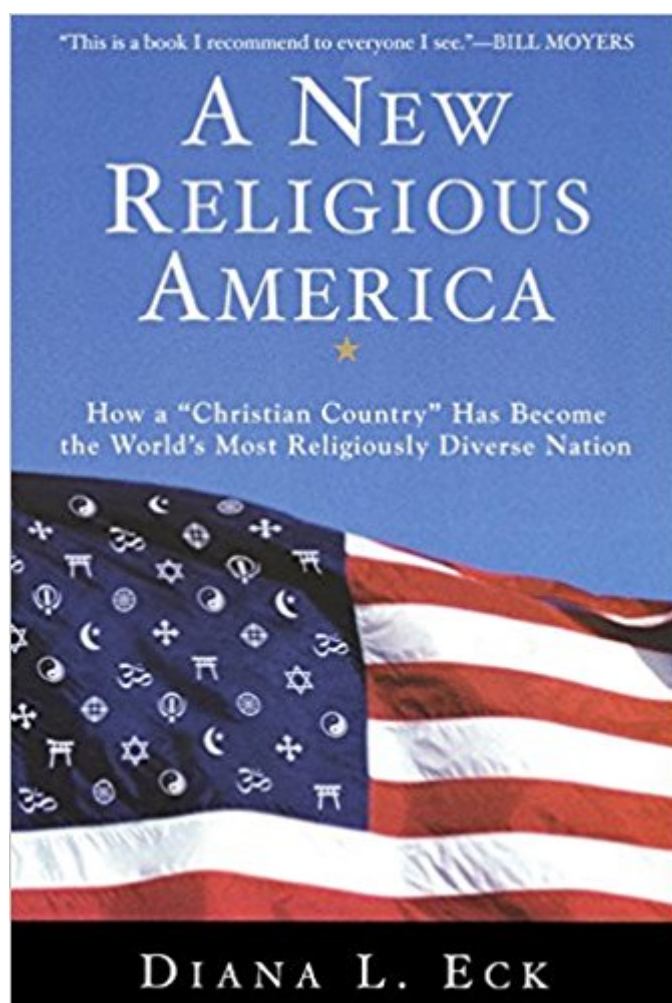


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# A New Religious America: How A "Christian Country" Has Become The World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation



## Synopsis

Why Understanding America's Religious Landscape Is the Most Important Challenge Facing Us Today  
The 1990s saw the U.S. Navy commission its first Muslim chaplain and open its first mosque. There are presently more than three hundred temples in Los Angeles, home to the greatest variety of Buddhists in the world. There are more American Muslims than there are American Episcopalians, Jews, or Presbyterians.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Eck, professor of comparative religion at Harvard University, delivers a stunning tour de force that may forever change the way Americans claim to be "one nation, under God." Drawing on her work with the Pluralism Project, an ongoing study of religious diversity in the United States, Eck focuses here on the explosion of Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist communities in America, particularly since 1965. How has the growth of these religions changed the American landscape? And just as important, how are the religions themselves changing because of America? Eck's travels take her (and us) to major cities, but also to places such as Greenville, S.C.; Portland, Maine; and Toledo, Ohio. Eck is a highly skilled ethnographer who delicately balances the challenge of interpreting events while also participating in them. The success of this portrait lies in the details: in the Nikes and Reeboks that adorn the shoe racks in Sikh gurdwaras, Islamic mosques and Hindu temples; in the Muslim Girl Scout who promises to "serve Allah and my country

America has always been a fundamentally Christian or "Judaean-Christian" country with a few

atheists and agnostics included. We're a secular, pluralist polity within that framework or so the received opinion goes. But in this wide-ranging book, Eck (religious studies, Harvard) shows us that this received opinion is erroneous. The framework is now, and in fact has always been, much broader. Eck discusses the history in America of three religious traditions with large numbers of adherents: Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Islam, she shows, arrived with African slaves. Buddhism and Hinduism came early as well, with the first Asian immigrants to the West Coast. These faiths are growing rapidly because of recent changes in our immigration laws and political turmoil in much of Asia, and thus our sense of religious pluralism needs to broaden. Well written and thorough, this volume will appeal especially to scholars, but casual readers will find much to enlighten them. Warmly recommended for both academic and public libraries. James F. DeRoche, Alexandria, VA Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Excellent beginning overview of Religions in America (mainstream major religions at least) -- diversity within each major tradition, regional differences. impact of U.S. cultural dynamics on religious practice in the U.S. (including differences between first generation immigrant practices and communities of practice from U.S.-generated versions of various religions). Required a great deal of supplementation, but her Pluralism Project and example of respectful field work in varied faith communities with undergrad and grad students both at the Harvard Pluralism Project and as applied in this text facilitates that expansion of collaborative teaching-learning.

This an eck-cellent book, if I may say so. The author provides a detailed and sensitive view of how America has become a religiously pluralist society. At times the detail was more than I needed. Ms. Eck wants to give a thorough picture of the religious diversity not only of America, but also of the major religions which are part of our society. She provides in depth descriptions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, and shows that each of these religions has many strands, and that each religion is developing its own American flavor. In her effort to be thorough, however, she includes so much detail that I found the reading to be heavy sledding at times. Nonetheless, this is a valuable book which added significantly to my appreciation of each of the religions described.

Diana Eck's book, *A New Religious America* is an eye-opener. After studying how religious diversity plays out socially and spiritually in India, she discovered that the United States is now the most religiously diverse nation in the world. She launched the Pluralism Project to study this

phenomenon, a project that continues. This book is both a status report on religion in America and an appeal for moving from tolerance through recognition of diversity to pluralism--the idea that we need to know about one another's spiritual lives and traditions to be mature, and even wise, citizens. For Eck, the religious freedom free from government favor or coercion envisaged by the Founding Fathers is a gift that has expanded far beyond anything they could have thought. Her exploration of the varieties of religious traditions in America, and of the diversity within each tradition, is a giant step in genuine understanding. A highlight of her accessible, easily readable survey is her explanations of how these traditions are affecting American religious consciousness, and how American religious freedom is affecting the newer traditions that come here. Something wholly new is emerging in this country, and Eck captures its present moment and awakens us to a world right around us that we can easily fail to see.

Diana Eck is well known for her work and research in the field of diversity and the ever changing culture in the United States and the world today. This is a very important read for those who want to understand the every changing fabric of America today.

Purchased as a school book. Really enjoyed reading it as it provides an eye opening perspective on religion in America!

This was one of the texts that was required for a world religions class that I am taking this semester. There is no doubt that the author is passionate about her subject, but the book never made the leap from identifying the problem (over and over again) to making an argument for concrete solutions. The material she presented could have been shared in one hundred pages instead of four hundred pages and said the same thing.

good book

This was a text for the class "Understanding Religious Traditions in Multicultural America." Confusing, verbose with too many examples and without direction, the entire class recommended our professor to never use it again. (We were her guinea pigs.) Fortunately she agreed with us, but it meant we couldn't sell back our books to the bookstore since it wasn't in demand the next year. However sore that is, to lose money over a horrible book, I'm glad others at my college won't be tortured by it. I would only recommend this book if someone wants//needs a lot of examples about

various religions (Islam, Buddhism, etc.) blooming up in the US and the hardships they had to overcome/impressive places of worship.

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