

# BOOK ENDORSEMENTS

## ***Christian America and the Kingdom of God***

by Richard T. Hughes, Distinguished Professor of Religion and  
Senior Ernest L. Boyer Fellow, Messiah College  
University of Illinois Press, July 2007



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*"Anyone who thinks America is a Christian nation or that it exemplifies the kingdom of God should read this book. Hughes reminds Christians of who Jesus is and what he teaches, something many seem to have forgotten, but he also gives a searching historical account of how such misunderstandings ever arose in the first place. A powerful call for truth in the muddled world that confuses Christianity and American nationalism, this is a book for our time."* —Robert Bellah, coauthor, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*

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*"Richard T. Hughes gives us a powerful and eloquent critique of those who would use a distorted interpretation of Christian belief to further their political agenda. He does this with impressive theological scholarship and with an unswerving commitment to peace and social justice."* —Howard Zinn, author, *A People's History of the United States: 1492 to Present*

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*"This work is to be located in the first rank of the many new debates regarding the nexus between 'religion' and 'politics' in America. Hughes bases his narrative on thorough research, is at home in the biblical and theological literature that informs the debates, and demonstrates a conscience for presenting an approach that should advance the common good."* —Martin E. Marty, author, *The Protestant Voice in American Pluralism*

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*"Hughes's deep historical learning and his trenchant analysis of current events demand close attention. The highlight of this challenging book is its extensive canvassing of the material in the Old and New Testaments concerning what 'chosen people' and 'kingdom of God' meant for the biblical writers. Those who think that the United States is a distinctly Christian nation and those who are sure it is not will both read this book with great profit."* —Mark A. Noll, author, *God and Race in American Politics: A Short History*

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*"With relevant analysis and restrained passion, Hughes employs both the Bible and American history to dismantle the politically dangerous idea of a Christian America. Few have written on this topic with as much intelligence and authority as he."* —Diana Butler Bass, author, *Christianity for the Rest of Us* and *A People's History of Christianity*

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*"With passion and compelling evidence, this superb book shows the clear difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of America."* —Donald B. Kraybill, author, *The Upside-Down Kingdom*

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*"With roots in the Churches of Christ—a tradition that takes the Bible with great seriousness—Hughes knows his New Testament and tells those who place flags above their Bibles that the kingdom of God salutes no flag. We owe him a debt for combining his knowledge as a historian with his insight into Hebrew and Christian scripture."* —Robert M. Randolph, Chaplain, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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*"Meticulously researched, brilliantly reasoned, and carefully written, this book deserves to become a classic. Grounded in the prophetic peace-and-justice values of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, this volume reflects the soul of a prophet and the intellect of a scholar. This book is timeless in theme and timely in need."* —Dr. Ronald B. Sobel, Senior Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York




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*"This may well be the best book ever written about American civil religion and our peculiar penchant for fashioning a god in Uncle Sam's image. Hughes writes with rare clarity and theological precision about issues that have blinded us since our nation's founding."* —Tony Norman, columnist, and associate editor, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

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*"As a Christian and a citizen who is distressed by the shadow side of my country and my faith tradition, I am one of many who owe Hughes a debt of gratitude for his effort to restore integrity to our religious and political life. If you care about (or are confused by) the way some political and religious leaders have abused Christianity to bless the lesser angels of our nature, you must read this book."* —Parker J. Palmer, author, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*

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*"One does not need to be a genius to see that the U.S.--politically, culturally, and ideologically--has lost its way. A vigorous, penetrating, and compelling analysis of how we got where we are with a mistaken sense of U.S. identity, this book will be immensely instructive as we sort out the recent binge of religious self-indulgence and return to the reality of life in the world."* —Walter Brueggemann, author, *The Prophetic Imagination*

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*"With peerless research into both biblical and historical sources, Hughes dispels the myth of America as a 'Christian nation.' The United States, as the author demonstrates, falls short of that standard by almost any criteria: historical, biblical, legal, moral, and empirical. Hughes is persuasive and lucid; his arguments deserve a wide hearing."* —Randall Balmer, author, *Thy Kingdom Come: How the Religious Right Distorts the Faith and Threatens America*

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*"Jesus' vision was of peace and justice in a world that belonged to a God of justice and peace. What, then, of an America that plans war, supports oppression, and believes the world belongs to it? Since many Americans claim we are a Christian nation, they stand self-indicted, and in this powerful and persuasive book, Hughes argues that they have indicted their country as well as themselves."* —John Dominic Crossan, author, *God and Empire: Jesus Against Rome, Then and Now*

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*"Americanized Christianity has equated 'Christian America' with the kingdom of God, but the real biblical kingdom of God is characterized by peace and justice, not greed, violence, and war. As a black Christian who has wrestled with these issues for more than fifty years, I find this to be an exceptional book. I highly recommend it."* —John M. Perkins, President, John M. Perkins Foundation for Reconciliation and Development, Jackson, Mississippi

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*"An early Christian writer once explained the convictions of his fellow believers to a Roman official with these words: every foreign country is their homeland and every homeland is a foreign country. That's a lesson we American Christians desperately need to learn anew in our present day, and Hughes has shown himself to be a master teacher on this important subject in this fine book."* —Richard J. Mouw, President and Professor of Christian Philosophy, Fuller Theological Seminary



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*"In the great tradition of the Hebrew prophets, Hughes calls upon America to critically examine the myth of a Christian nation, tracing its history from the colonial period to the present day. Every student of American religion, American history, and American politics should read this book."* —Jack Scott, Chancellor, California Community College System

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*"An insightful, unsettling analysis of a fundamental misunderstanding and misuse of Christian faith to advance agendas that seem clearly at odds with the kind of 'kingdom' Jesus speaks of in the gospels. In these dark times, Hughes sheds a discerning light, reminding us that the kingdom of God is still at hand."* —John Neafsey, author, *A Sacred Voice is Calling: Personal Vocation and Social Conscience*

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