



God's Province: Evangelical Christianity, Political Thought, and Conservatism in Alberta

Clark Banack

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Compared to the United States, it is assumed that religion has not been a significant factor in Canada's political development. In *God's Province*, Clark Banack challenges this assumption, showing that, in Alberta, religious motivation has played a vital role in shaping its political trajectory.

For Henry Wise Wood, president of the United Farmers of Alberta from 1916 until 1931, William "Bible Bill" Aberhart, founder of the Alberta Social Credit Party and premier from 1935 until 1943, Aberhart's protégé Ernest Manning, Alberta's longest serving premier (1943–1968), and Manning's son Preston, founder of the Alberta-based federal Reform Party of Canada, religion was central to their thinking about human agency, the purpose of politics, the role of the state, the nature of the economy, and the proper duties of citizens. Drawing on substantial archival research and in-depth interviews, *God's Province* highlights the strong link that exists between the religiously inspired political thought and action of these formative leaders, the US evangelical Protestant tradition from which they drew, and the emergence of an individualistic, populist, and anti-statist sentiment in Alberta that is largely unfamiliar to the rest of Canada.

Covering nearly a century of Alberta's history, Banack offers an illuminating reconsideration of the political thought of these leaders, the goals of the movements they led, and the roots of Alberta's distinctiveness within Canada. A fusion of religious history, intellectual history, and political thought, *God's Province* exposes the ways in which individual politicians have shape one province's political culture.

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