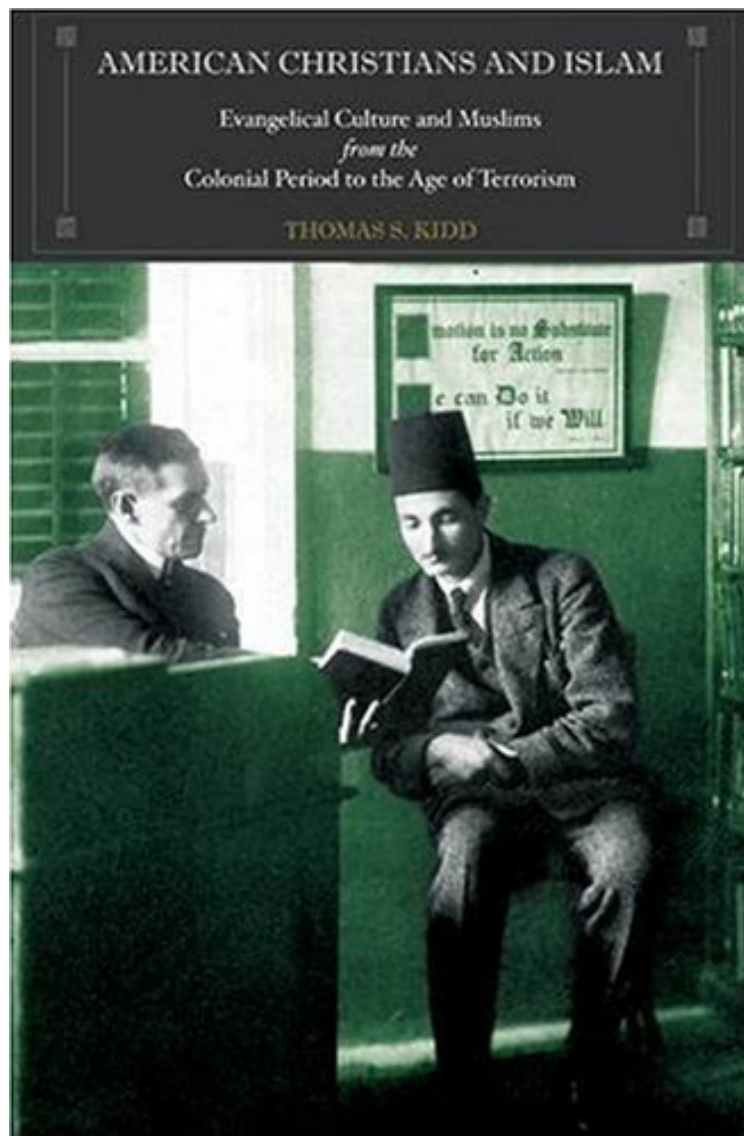


(Download ebook) American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism

American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism

Thomas S. Kidd

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Thomas S. Kidd : American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Helpful Historical Survey By D. C. Kosobucki This is a detailed and thorough documentation and analysis of what American Christians have been saying about Islam and/or Muslims throughout American history. It's interesting to see the key themes that have remained central to the discussion despite changing historical circumstances. The reader will be motivated to think more clearly about Islam in order to be sure he or she is not simply parroting views that have been articulated throughout several centuries or leaning on convenient stereotypes. 7 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Serious, readable history of American Protestant views of Islam By Kecia Ali Kidd points out early in his eminently readable account of American Christian images of Muslims and Islam that he is not a scholar of Islam but rather of American religion. Thus, he makes no attempt to assess the accuracy of the claims about Muhammad, the Qur'an, or Muslim "culture" that his mostly conservative, mission-focused Protestant scholars and authors make over three-plus centuries, from the colonial period until the aftermath of 9/11. Instead, he shows both continuous strands in views of Muslims and significant shifts in how Christians related to them. To do so, he draws from a vast array of church publications, newspaper accounts, and scholarly and popular books. His first chapter, on Anglo-American images of Islam, demonstrates how Islam was mostly used in intra-Protestant debate: one way to discredit your opponents was to liken them to Muhammad. (A parallel theme, the polemical Protestant link between Islam and "popery" [Catholicism] recurs throughout.) The next chapter, on images of Islam and Muslims in the early republic, addresses the concern over Barbary piracy and the captivity narratives that resulted, with increased attention to the political despotism as well as theological error of Muslims. The next three chapters focus on missionary activity aimed (largely in vain) at conversion of Muslims. These fascinating chapters, full of historical detail, illustrate the persistence of images of Muhammad as "false prophet" -- and the ways in which negative images of Islam's prophet and holy book could serve as a stumbling block to evangelization. Increasingly, however, Zionism and American foreign policy in the Middle East created a barrier to understanding between Arab Muslims and Christian missionaries. Kidd here, as earlier, draws links between various theological approaches (premillennial dispensationalism, postmillennialism, etc.) and attitudes toward Israel and the place of Arabs and Islam in end-times scenarios - a subject which recurs in the penultimate chapter. (For those without solid background in Christian theology, a few more sentences of explanation at strategic points would be useful.) A chapter on Muslims in America contains more exposition as a prelude to an exploration of how Christian theologians, white and black, responded to African-American Muslim movements, separatist and "orthodox" (not his term). The final chapter, on post-9/11 Christian approaches to Islam, makes the case successfully that though the negative images circulating are perhaps proportionately more present as part of evangelical Christian discussions, they are largely consonant with those offered by American Christian thinkers over the centuries. 2 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Christian Evangelicalism in the Middle East By William Garrison Jr. "American Christians and Islam" by Thomas Kidd (2009). This Christian author presents a very unbiased review of Christian missionary activities in the Middle East (c. 1770s-2000). While the author reviews the efforts of various Christian sects, he does not support any particular sect or method. What I found of great value is that the author briefly discusses many specific missionaries, what their objectives were, and what degree of success or shortcomings they had. The author noted that despite the missionary efforts very few Muslims actually converted. From the inside book cover: "He shows how accounts of 'Mahometan' despotism and lurid stories of European enslavement by Barbary pirates fueled early evangelicals' fears concerning Islam, and describes the growing conservatism of American missions to Muslim lands up through the post-World War II era. Kidd... demonstrates why Islam has become central to evangelical 'end-times' narratives.... Kidd explains why Christians themselves are ironically to blame for the failure of evangelism in the Muslim world." The author notes how American Christian evangelical leaders rebuked Pres. George Bush for maintaining that Islam is a "Religion of Peace" and how both Christians and Muslims "have the same God." The author noted the public impact of Pope Benedict XVI (c.2006) quoting a fourteenth-century Byzantine emperor who said "Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhumane." Good companion books include: "Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East: 1776 to the Present" by Michael Oren and "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam" by Robert Spencer.

In the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, many of America's Christian evangelicals have denounced Islam as a "demonic" and inherently violent religion, provoking frustration among other Christian conservatives who wish to present a more appealing message to the world's Muslims. Yet as Thomas Kidd reveals in this sobering book, the conflicted views expressed by today's evangelicals have deep roots in American history. Tracing Islam's role in the popular imagination of American Christians from the colonial period to today, Kidd demonstrates that Protestant evangelicals have viewed Islam as a global threat--while also actively seeking to convert Muslims to the Christian faith--since the nation's founding. He shows how accounts of "Mahometan" despotism and lurid stories of European enslavement by Barbary pirates fueled early evangelicals' fears concerning Islam, and describes the growing conservatism of American missions to Muslim lands up through the post-World War II era. Kidd exposes American Christians' anxieties about an internal Islamic threat from groups like the Nation of Islam in the 1960s and America's immigrant Muslim population today, and he demonstrates why Islam has become central to evangelical "end-times"

narratives. Pointing to many evangelicals' unwillingness to acknowledge Islam's theological commonalities with Christianity and their continued portrayal of Islam as an "evil" and false religion, Kidd explains why Christians themselves are ironically to blame for the failure of evangelism in the Muslim world. *American Christians and Islam* is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand the causes of the mounting tensions between Christians and Muslims today.

"This concise and well-organized study offers readers an excellent summary of American popular attitudes toward Islam from the eighteenth century onward."--Walter Russell Mead, *Foreign Affairs* "Kidd's is a sympathetic and well-informed voice of sanity and Christian equanimity in the midst of this turmoil. His closing appeals to reason, civility, and charitable discourse could provide a better setting, I believe, for a fruitful mission to Islam. Otherwise, one fears what level of catastrophe may be required to discredit Dispensationalist craziness."--Fr. Patrick Henry Reardon, *Orthodoxy Today* "Offers an informative tonic that might move Christians in the U.S. beyond deeply embedded suspicions and into more hospitable encounters with Muslims at home and abroad."--Anne Blue Wills, *Christian Century* "A key strength of *American Christians and Islam* is that it surveys a spectrum of American Christian and evangelical thought vis--vis Muslims across three centuries, and does so in a manner that is very clear, so that even a reader new to the subject could appreciate it. Assigned in a class on Middle Eastern or Islamic studies, this book would be guaranteed to stimulate lively debate."--Heather J. Sharkey, *Contemporary Islam* "As Islam continues its slow but steady growth in America, evangelicals of whatever stripe would be wise to consult *American Christians and Islam*, particularly as they continue to seek ways to approach Islam with sobriety and faithfulness."--Adam S. Francisco, *Modern Reformation* "Thomas Kidd has done a great service with his publication of *American Christians and Islam*. Although there is an endless array of studies on various aspects of the relationships between Muslims and Christians throughout the past 1,400 years, this is, to my knowledge, the first to examine American Evangelical attitudes toward Islam. Kidd presents a vast amount of material in a clear, readable manner, and his book should be of interest to anyone trying to understand the extremely complex dynamic of contemporary Muslim-Christian relations."--Sandra Tonies Keating, *Touchstone* "This timely book about American Christian attitudes toward Islam and Muslims is a useful addition to the growing literature on Anglo-American engagements with Islam and Muslims since the colonial age. It is noteworthy primarily for its chronological range and its coverage of American missionaries to the Muslim world."--Edward E. Curtis IV, *Journal of American History* "Kidd has produced a gem of a book. It needs to find a high place on interreligious as well as public-policy bibliographies."--John T. Pawlikowski, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* "Kidd's book ably captures the bombast and the predicament of American evangelicals as they attempted to reconcile the missionary imperative with a scrambled sense of eschatological geography."--Nicholas Guyatt, *Journal of the Ecclesiastical History Society* "The story that Kidd tells is compelling and enlightening in its nuanced depiction of conservative American Christian views on Islam and Muslims across three centuries. . . . [T]his book is a well-written and enlightening overview of the American Evangelical approach to Islam."--Akram Fouad Khater, *Catholic Historical Society* "[T]his book makes . . . [an] invaluable contribution . . . to our understanding of the history of evangelical attitudes toward Muslims and Islam."--Alan M. Guenther, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* "Kidd accomplishes the aims of his book well, illuminating nearly four hundred years of conservative American Christian interpretations of Islam. The length of the time period and the particular focus on American Christian views make this volume a unique, welcome addition to the field. The book is academic but accessible to a wide audience, a wellspring of primary source information and a penetrating survey. Scholars of American religious history and upper-level students of the subject will consult this volume for years to come."--James Gormam, *Restoration Quarterly* "In all respects, *American Christians and Islam* is a well-balanced, long overdue study, delving deep in the folk memory of America, painting a complex and suggestive profile of the Judeo-Christian-Muslim (dis)connection, celebrating both Christianity and Islamism, while formulating no apologies for either. . . . [I]t is an opportune appearance that seeks to do justice to Qur'anic verse and Islamic scholarship, an admirable monograph launching a timely invitation to grasp the true nature of Islam."--Adriana Neagu, *American British and Canadian Studies* From the Back Cover "Before Thomas Kidd's magisterial work, *American Christians and Islam*, no scholar had traced the long and convoluted history of Muslim-Christian exchange in the American experience from colonial beginnings to the present. Kidd brings a deep understanding of both traditions to his analysis and brilliantly demonstrates how so many contemporary American denunciations of Islam--especially evangelical denunciations--have a rich history that goes all the way back to the Age of Exploration and the first English settlements."--Harry S. Stout, *Yale University* "Though its emergence as one of the central concerns of our time took the secular-minded by surprise, the friction between Christianity and Islam--the world's two largest and most energetically missionary faiths--is nothing new in American history. As Thomas Kidd shows in this thoughtful and highly accessible account, the conflict runs like a thread through the American past. Knowing that history will provide us with valuable insights about the road ahead--and about ourselves."--Wilfred M. McClay, *University of Tennessee* "*American Christians and Islam* gives historical perspective on a timely topic. Kidd provides a thorough examination of the prism through which American evangelicals have viewed Islam, a prism consisting of fears, challenges, and opportunities. He offers an important chapter in the story of

American attitudes toward Muslims. This book fills a gap in the scholarship of American religious culture."--Frank Lambert, author of *Religion in American Politics* "American Christians and Islam combines a timely subject, stylistic directness, and a broad scope to create an effective and useful historical survey of evangelical attitudes about Islam that is accessible to a wide audience. Kidd provides succinct readings and elucidates important patterns and shifts that offer readers a revealing overview of the engagements of U.S. evangelical culture with the Islamic world."--Timothy W. Marr, author of *The Cultural Roots of American Islamism* "A significant contribution to the field. There have been plenty of books on Western views of Islam, but none has focused exclusively or comprehensively on American Christian attitudes over such a long period. The scope and targeting of this book make it unique and pathbreaking."--Gerald R. McDermott, Roanoke College

About the Author Thomas Kidd is associate professor of history at Baylor University and resident scholar at Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion. He is the author of "The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America" and "The Protestant Interest: New England after Puritanism".