Asahara, followed by a small upper elite, at the top of a hierarchical system. Asahara and the elite had already attained their higher spiritual ranks through a mastery of ascetic practices. This status-conscious system combined with an absolute devotion to their *guru*, led to ordinary members being expected to obey whatever Asahara or the upper elite might dictate. It thus became difficult for ordinary members to raise a dissenting voice. Members assigned to kill or kidnap Aum's enemies actually regarded their task as honorable, because such deeds were a way of carrying out *poa* ritual and of furthering the movement's salvific Shambhala Plan.

In several parts of this book, I found interpretations by Reader that have much in common with those put forward by a leading Japanese scholar, Shimazono Susumu in his *Gendai Shūkyō no Kanōsei* [Potential for Contemporary Religion]. For Japanese scholars who have read Shimazono's works or the Japanese translation of Robert Jay Lifton's *Destroying the world to save it*, therefore, Reader's interpretation may not be remarkably new. This book is of value, however, since it takes into account materials and academic studies of Aum that largely have been available only in Japanese.

Finally, I should like to take issue with Reader on one point. He describes the *kyôsaku* or "waking stick" as an example of "ritualized violence" and "a symbol of the strictness and austerity of Zen tradition" (p.139). Never having encountered such an interpretation before, I was puzzled and taken aback. Reader's definition of religious violence would seem to be over-broad. This is perhaps from a lack of clarity in explaining just what he means by religiously motivated violence. One does not necessarily have to accept Aum's interpretation of "Buddhism" as a representation of Buddhist teaching as a whole.

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Whitebread Protestants: Food and Religion in American Culture, by DANIEL SACK. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000, x +262pp; $24.95 U.S./$38.99 Cdn. (paper).

Daniel Sack introduces this study with a telling internet parable about his subject:

> A second-grade class was doing a project in comparative religions; each child was asked to say something about his or her faith and bring in a symbol of their belief. On the day of the assignment, the first child stood up and said, "My name is Joshua. I go to Beth Shalom. I am Jewish, and this is a Star of David." The second child stood up and said, "My name is Marguerite. I go to St. Mary's. I am Catholic, and this is a crucifix." The third child stood up and said, "My name is Fred. I go to Grace Church. I am Protestant, and this is a casserole"(7).

This is a delightful book: well and warmly written, and accessible to a general audience. It is also a work that scholars of North American religion should not ignore. The author, Associate Director of the Material History of American Religion Project, makes the important point that a focus on ideas and organizations may neglect key dimensions of American religious identity.

Sack's focus is on American mainline Protestants, a group he terms "whitebread" because of the eucharistic bread they often prefer, and, significantly, because of their dominant social and racial makeup. This is a group often maligned for loose doctrine and practice, social elitism, and a lack of exotic characteristics that make other groups interesting. But by focussing on the particularity of mainstream white Protestantism through its material culture, Sack makes a compelling case for its validity as an object of anthropological study. (For this Canadian reviewer, the example of the United Church of Canada comes to mind: often derided by conservatives for "anything goes" theological tendencies, the UCC nonetheless maintains a loyalty and identity which, even today, often

centres around an opposition to alcohol and gambling.)

Sack employs several approaches to his subject matter, including historical narrative, cultural anthropology, and ethnography, and the book's five chapters tend to read as separate, if linked papers. But the overall point is clear: an examination of American Protestant approaches to the material aspects of religious life, in this instance food, tells us much, not only about Protestant identity, but also about class, ideological and professional politics, racial and gender divides, demographic change, economic history, and theology.

In a brilliant opening chapter on the history of American Protestant communion practices, Sack points out that battles over the use of wine or grape juice, a common cup or individual cuplets, were embedded in and expressed larger issues of clerical authority, the ecclesiastical role of women, the conflict of science and religion, industrialization and technological change, immigration and class.

Nineteenth-century proponents of grape juice for communion included the Women's Christian Temperance Union (and in Canada, Social Gospel progressives in the United Farm Women), which provided vehicles for women's activism in the church and challenges to the privileged authority of male clergy. Proponents of individual communion glasses expressed sentiments typical of nineteenth-century sanitation and moral reform movements which sought to address perceived threats from immigration and the growth of the working classes in an industrializing America. The characterization of the common chalice as 'unhygienic' also united medical professionals and laity against 'backward' or 'obstructionist' clergy, and introduced a new individualism into popular eucharistic theology. And not incidentally, both campaigns fostered business empires, like that of Dr. Welch's Grape Juice.

Subsequent chapters deal with the use of food to reinforce congregational community (and gender roles), the institutionalization of Christian hospitality and elite responsibility in food banks and soup kitchens, the development of a consciousness of global food and hunger politics, and the role of 'good' and 'bad' foods in the formation of moral lives (and the Kellogg empire . . .). The chapter on congregational potlucks and coffee hours is particularly engaging. Sack proposes that a particular combination of American geography, settlement patterns and the separation of church and state, led to the development of the "social congregation" for which food was an essential glue.

This book serves well as a manifesto promoting material culture studies in contemporary religion. It also provides a unique gateway to a study of key issues in American Protestantism: the roles of clergy and laity, the authority of scripture, the place of theology, the class, ethnic and political dimensions of religious activism. More broadly, it makes telling points about the relation of religion to culture, politics and the economy in nineteenth and twentieth-century America. As such, it is useful as a reference or course text well beyond the particular niches of material culture or of Protestantism.

Whitebread Protestants does have some limitations: it covers a lot of ground, inevitably leaving one wishing for more specific treatment of some particulars. Was the opposition of physicians to the common communion cup really part of the larger conflict of religion and science? If so, what were its specific connections to this larger debate? The discussion of the 'social congregation' begs for reference to literature, from Weber to Stark, on sect and church in America. The description of the giant Willow Creek Church food court begs a more detailed ethnography of what diners actually do there, as opposed to what they are reported to do. The book works well as an introduction to a field, and a call for further study. As such, it is long overdue, and most welcome.

A good friend of mine is fond of an old Anglican Prayer Book rendition of Psalm 103, verse 5: "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Sacks demonstrates the love of food (and showing the love of God through food) has also been central in less liturgical circles: an intimate part of the crises and renewals of

American Protestant Christianity.

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One True God: Historical Consequences of Monotheism, by RODNEY STARK. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, 319 pp. $24.95 (cloth).

Rodney Stark is a wonderful storyteller. You always know who the villains and good guys are, and his prose never lacks for dramatic flourish. In this book, we even get pictures. What's more, he often manages to scavenge wonderful accounts from other fields that enliven and re-direct the received versions of history that often mislead our theorizing. Did Constantine make the Roman Empire Christian? Is Judaism a non-missionizing religion? Was Moorish Spain a unique haven of tolerance? Did Christian missionaries disappear after World War I? The received wisdom says 'yes,' and Stark's more careful accounts help us to see why that wisdom is wrong and why it matters.

In this new book (the first of two that will cover similar historical terrain), we are introduced to missionizing Jews in the Roman Empire who offered pagan Romans a monotheistic faith attractive enough to generate significant conversions (and ironically set the stage for the spread of the Christian movement, but that was the story told in an earlier book). We meet Constantine, who establishes just the sorts of state subsidies that turn an energetic early Christian movement into a lazy monopoly. We see pious monks setting off for northern Europe where they manage to convert various elite ladies, followed (after a period of resistance and often the occurrence of a convincing miracle) by their husbands. Unfortunately, neither the monks nor the elites ever bothered to teach the masses what this new faith was about, so there is some question about whether "Christian" Europe ever really was very Christian at all (similarly whether Latin America was ever very Catholic or whether, even in its earliest years, India was very Buddhist — all for similar reasons). We also find early Muslims establishing territory largely by conquest and treaty, with the mass conversion of the populations largely awaiting the impetus provided in the twentieth century by conflict with colonial Western powers.

Only when a religion spreads through network ties at the grassroots level does it succeed, and that strategy characterized both early Muslims in Indonesia and evangelical Christian mission efforts for the last two centuries. Far from disappearing in the 1930s, as liberal academics declared, Christian missionaries, mostly from the U.S., are more numerous and more widespread today than ever. They just aren't from the liberal denominations. But they *are* making serious inroads into Latin American and European societies that were never really very Christian before. "Only authentic missions get results," Stark declares (85), and by authentic he means grassroots, person-to-person, and unsubsidized by outside sources. By results, he means that converts give up whatever other god or gods they have previously claimed, swearing allegiance to the One True God.

We also meet, in these pages, some remarkable Jewish communities that use their distinct language, identifiable names, sacred text, food, appearance, and resistance to intermarriage as armor against assimilation. Perversely, it helps, of course, that the societies in which these Jews lived often enforced the encapsulation that helped the communities survive. But some of the Jews were positively proactive in asserting their own distinction. When others were adopting modernized Reform practices, Jews in Eastern Europe declared that Jews should resist all things modern, including any change in clothing styles, thus giving birth to "traditional" Orthodox Jewish black hats and side curls.

On the other side of European Judaism's tragic history, we also encounter a region in