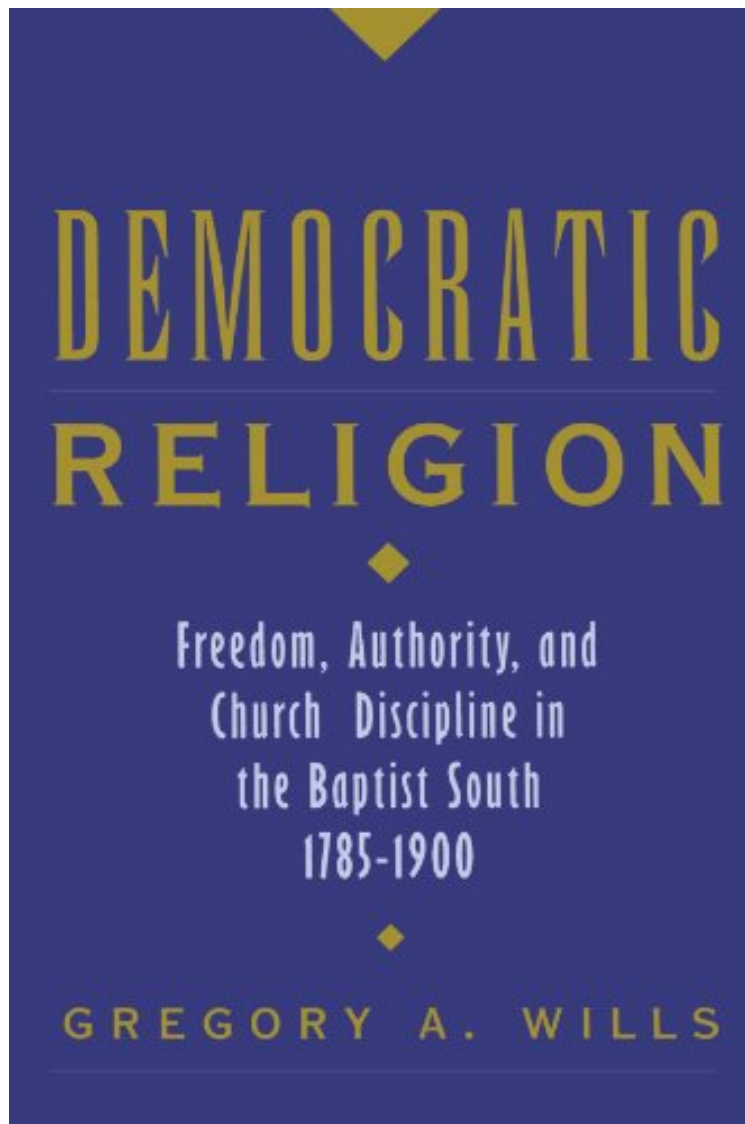


(Ebook pdf) Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South, 1785-1900 (Religion in America)

Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South, 1785-1900 (Religion in America)

Gregory A. Wills

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Gregory A. Wills : Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South, 1785-1900 (Religion in America) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South, 1785-1900 (Religion in America):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Get it for what it is: Great information, a bit tedious as a read
By Tyler Holloway
Dr. Greg Wills has produced an important work documenting how Baptist churches in the South functioned between 1785-1900. If you are interested in the topic, especially how gender and race affected church governance or how church discipline was carried out, then grab a copy of this book. My one warning is that you shouldn't expect this to be a page-turner. Wills has tediously documented this data by pouring through the minutes of church business meetings from the time period, and the work reflects that. It is a lot of numbers and dates and at times seems repetitive, but Dr. Wills is documenting the evidence that he found through what I can only imagine was a ton of man hours. Expect this going in and enjoy the book for what it is and you will find it very helpful
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Wills' analysis of Southern Baptist democratic religion was extremely helpful in giving me a better context for denominational p
By Jordan Williams
Helpful and illuminating history of the Southern Baptist denomination's astute conviction for church discipline. Dr. Wills' analysis of Southern Baptist democratic religion was extremely helpful in giving me a better context for denominational polity and the moral/theological erosion of SB denomination with the increase of urbanization and bombardments of a pervasively progressive culture.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Helpful, but gets a little bogged down in the ...
By TC
Helpful, but gets a little bogged down in the details and drags a bit. In particular, the chapters on African-American churches and women in democratic, Baptist churches were insightful.

No American denomination identified itself more closely with the nation's democratic ideal than the Baptists. Most antebellum southern Baptist churches allowed women and slaves to vote on membership matters and preferred populist preachers who addressed their appeals to the common person. Paradoxically no denomination could wield religious authority as zealously as the Baptists. Between 1785 and 1860 they ritually excommunicated forty to fifty thousand church members in Georgia alone. Wills demonstrates how a denomination of freedom-loving individualists came to embrace an exclusivist spirituality--a spirituality that continues to shape Southern Baptist churches in contemporary conflicts between moderates who urge tolerance and conservatives who require belief in scriptural inerrancy. Wills's analysis advances our understanding of the interaction between democracy and religious authority, and will appeal to scholars of American religion, culture, and history, as well as to Baptist observers.

Wills's work is excellent, both in its scholarship and presentation.--Mississippi Quarterly
Wills has produced a splendid study that should long serve as a model of how to research and to write religious history.--Baptist History and Heritage
"Wills' work is a thoughtful analysis of an historical practice with decidedly contemporary implications."--Journal of Southern Religion
"Well written, this book is a model of using church records as key sources. Important for students of southern religion and culture and American religious life more generally."--Choice
".will make a significant contribution to the field of American religious history."--Paul Harvey, Colorado College
"It is excellent, a real breakthrough in the use of local church records. His impressively documented and compelling argument brings to light the practice of Baptist 'democratic' culture during the century in which the South took shape.... Structured as it is on an imaginative exploitation of rich local Baptist records, especially in Georgia, this innovative work will be welcomed by students of American religion and Southern culture alike." --Donald G. Mathews, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
"Wills uses the prism of church discipline to examine critical questions of race, theology, the role of women, and the nature of the church as addressed by nineteenth-century Georgia Baptists. His well-written work offers a critical case study in Baptist polity and popular religion. The book is a valuable contribution to studies in grassroots Christianity in the South."--Bill J. Leonard, Wake Forest University
"This important study is going to generate a lot of rethinking and debate regarding the contested history of the Southern Baptist Convention."--George Marsden, University of Notre Dame
From the Back Cover
Democracy has not always fostered anti-authoritarian individualism. No American denomination identified itself more closely with the nation's democratic ideal than the Baptists. Most antebellum southern Baptist churches allowed women and slaves to vote on membership matters and preferred populist preachers who addressed their appeals to the common person. Paradoxically, no denomination wielded religious authority as zealously as the Baptists. Between 1785 and 1860 they ritually (and democratically) excommunicated forty to fifty thousand church members in Georgia alone. Wills demonstrates how a denomination of freedom-loving individualists came to embrace an exclusivist spirituality - a spirituality that continues to shape Southern Baptist churches in contemporary conflicts between moderates who urge tolerance and conservatives who require belief in scriptural inerrancy. Wills's analysis advances our understanding of the interaction between democracy and religious authority, and will appeal to scholars of American religion, culture, and history, as well as to Baptist observers.
About the Author
Gregory A. Wills is at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.