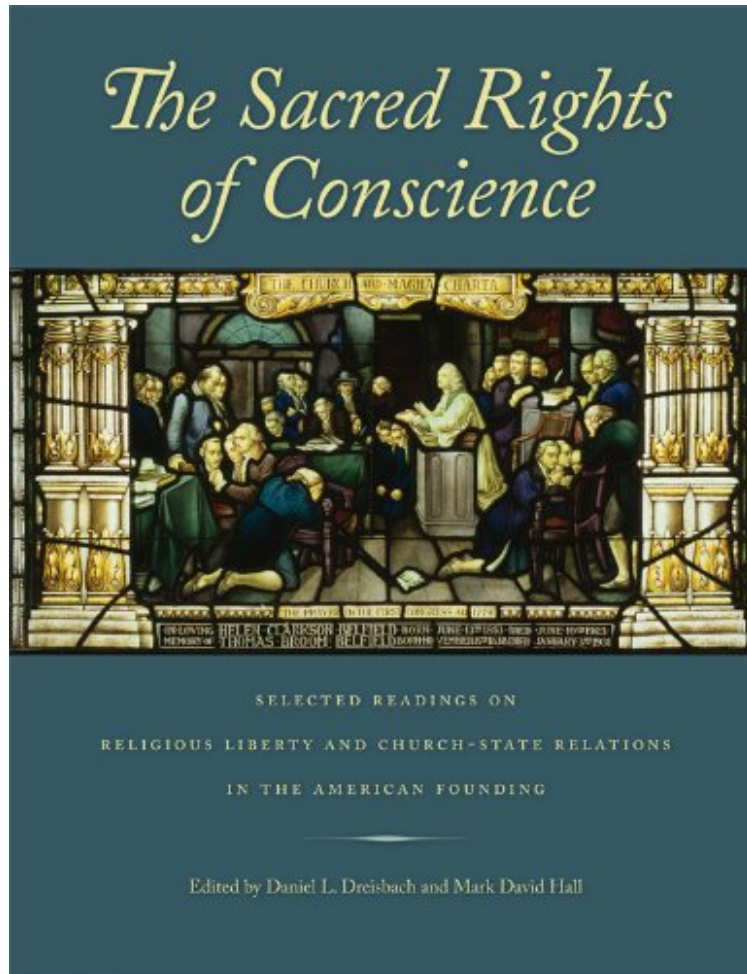


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The Sacred Rights of Conscience: Selected Readings on Religious Liberty and Church-State Relations in the American Founding

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origins of that phenomenon. Certainly the first amendment argues for separation of Church and State, but references to the Creator appear in our most important founding documents. This book reveals the background of the relationship between religion, the church and the political establishment through use of primary sources. The chronological organization of those sources allows the reader to make his own conclusions about the changing perception of that relationship. A short introduction at the beginning of each group of writings gives the editor's perspective on those writings' historical place and the influences that created them. Recommended reading for any student of American history who wishes to explore religion's influence on politics.

The Sacred Rights of Conscience provides students and scholars a rich collection of primary sources that illuminate the discussions and debates about religious liberty in the American founding era. This compilation of primary documents provides a thorough and balanced examination of the evolving relationship between public religion and American culture, from pre-colonial biblical and European sources to the early nineteenth century, to allow the reader to explore the social and political forces that defined the concept of religious liberty and shaped American church-state relations. Including material that has been previously unavailable or hard to find, The Sacred Rights of Conscience contains original documents from both public and private papers, such as constitutions, statutes, legislative resolutions, speeches, sermons, newspapers, letters, and diary entries. These documents provide a vivid reminder that religion was a dynamic factor in shaping American social, legal, and political culture and that there has been a struggle since the inception of the Republic to define the prudential and constitutional role of religion in public culture. Daniel L. Dreisbach is William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and Public Life for the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton University and professor in the School of Public Affairs at American University in Washington, D.C. Mark David Hall is Herbert Hoover Distinguished Professor of Political Science at George Fox University.