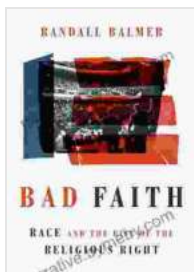


Race and the Rise of the Religious Right: Uncovering the Hidden Influence



Bad Faith: Race and the Rise of the Religious Right

by Randall Balmer

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 1857 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
X-Ray : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 91 pages



The rise of the Religious Right in the United States has been a significant force in shaping American politics for decades. This conservative Christian movement played a pivotal role in mobilizing voters to support Republican candidates and policies, particularly on issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, and school prayer. However, the underlying role of racial identity and politics in the Religious Right has often been overlooked.

The Invisible Influence of Race

Despite the predominantly white demographic of the Religious Right, many scholars have argued that race has profoundly influenced its political behavior. Racial resentment and the perceived threat to white Christian identity have been key factors in driving white evangelical support for conservative candidates and policies.

The shift of white evangelicals from the Democratic to the Republican Party in the latter half of the 20th century can be partly attributed to racial polarization. The Civil Rights Movement and the increasing racial diversity in American society led many white evangelicals to feel that their values and way of life were under attack.

The Southern Baptist Convention as a Case Study



The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the largest evangelical denomination in the US, provides a clear example of the intersection of race and politics in the Religious Right. For decades, the SBC was a bastion of segregation and white supremacy. However, in the 1970s and 1980s, a new generation of white evangelical leaders emerged within the SBC who sought to rebrand the denomination as a more inclusive and politically active force.

These leaders, such as Jerry Falwell, Paul Weyrich, and James Dobson, harnessed the racial anxieties of white evangelicals and mobilized them to support conservative candidates and causes. They portrayed abortion, same-sex marriage, and other progressive social policies as threats to both white Christian identity and the traditional American family.

The Moral Majority and White Identity Politics



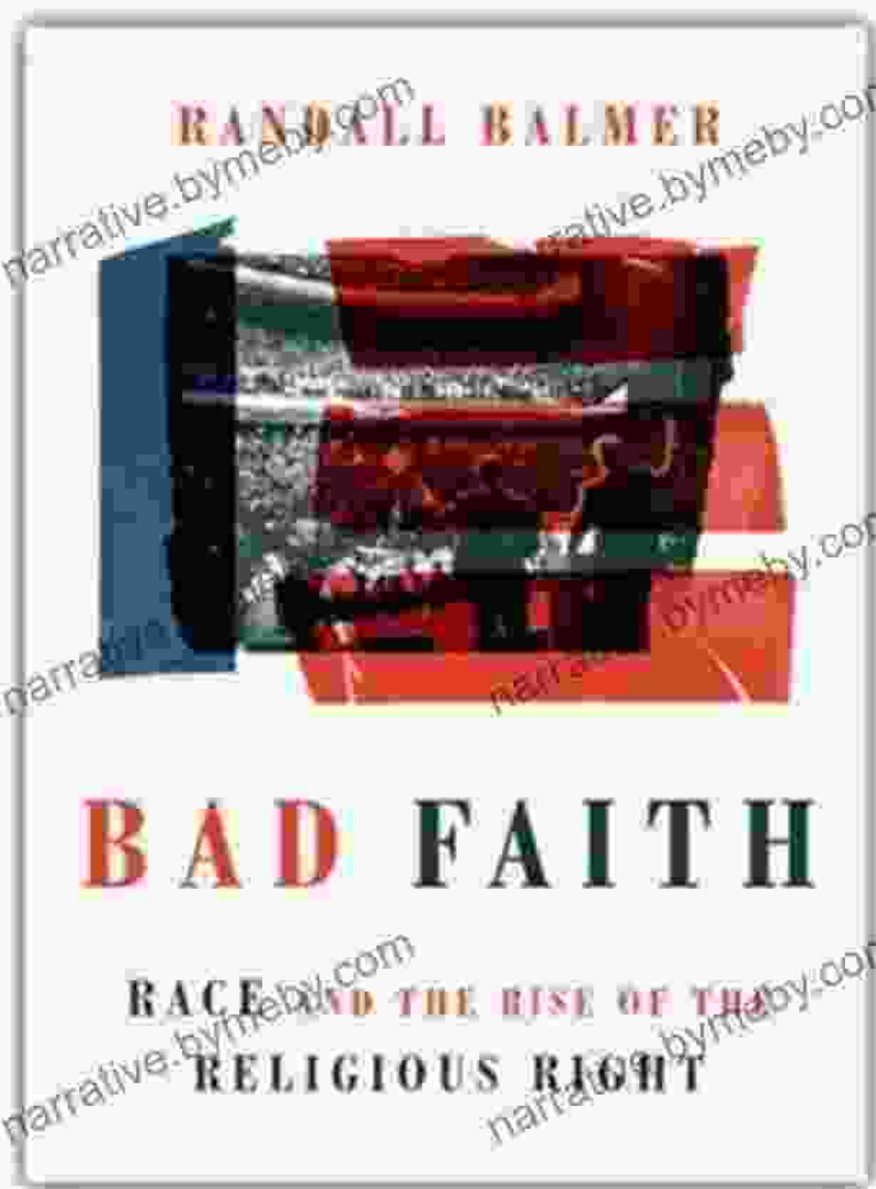
The Moral Majority, a Christian political organization founded by Jerry Falwell in 1979, played a key role in galvanizing white evangelicals around conservative causes. The Moral Majority used racially coded language and appeals to white identity to mobilize voters against policies that were seen as threatening to their way of life.

For example, the Moral Majority opposed busing to desegregate schools, portraying it as a threat to white children's education and safety. They also supported legislation that promoted traditional family values and opposed feminist and LGBTQ+ rights, which were seen as corrosive to white Christian culture.

The Impact on American Politics

The racialized politics of the Religious Right had a profound impact on American politics. It helped to rally white evangelicals around the Republican Party and played a significant role in Republican electoral victories in the 1980s and beyond.

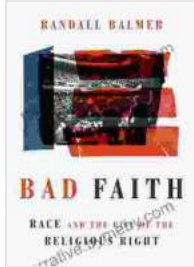
The Religious Right also influenced public policy, particularly on issues such as abortion, education, and social welfare. Conservative policies that appealed to white evangelical voters, such as school vouchers and restrictions on abortion, gained traction in the political arena.



The relationship between race and the Religious Right is a complex and often overlooked aspect of American politics. By understanding the hidden influence of racial identity and politics, we gain a deeper understanding of the motivations and impact of this powerful movement.

In the book "Race and the Rise of the Religious Right," historian Randall Balmer provides a comprehensive examination of this topic. Balmer's

meticulously researched and engagingly written book sheds light on the often-overlooked role of race in shaping the Religious Right and its impact on American society.



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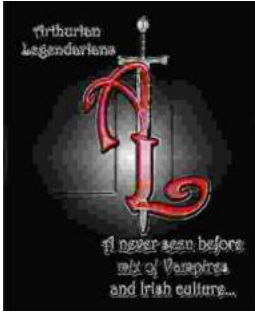
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