



Republicanism, Religion, and the Soul of America (ERIC VOEGELIN INST SERIES)

Ellis Sandoz

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As debates rage over the place of faith in our national life, Tocqueville's nineteenth-century crediting of religion for shaping America is largely overlooked today. Now, in *Republicanism, Religion, and the Soul of America*, Ellis Sandoz reveals the major role that Protestant Christianity played in the formation and early period of the American republic. Sandoz traces the rise of republican government from key sources in Protestant civilization, paying particular attention to the influence of the Bible on the Founders and the blossoming of the American mind in the eighteenth century.

Sandoz analyzes the religious debt of the emergent American community and its elevation of the individual person as unique in the eyes of the Creator. He shows that the true distinction of American republicanism lies in its grounding of human dignity in spiritual individualism and an understanding of man's capacity for self-government under providential guidance. Along the way, he addresses such topics as the neglected question of the education of the Founders for their unique endeavor, common law constitutionalism, the place of Latin and Greek classics in the Founders' thought, and the texture of religious experience from the Great Awakening to the Declaration of Independence

To establish a unifying theoretical perspective for his study, Sandoz considers the philosophical underpinnings of religion and the contribution that Eric Voegelin made to our understanding of religious experience. He contributes fresh studies of the character of Voegelin's thought: its relationship to Christianity; his debate with Leo Strauss over reason, revelation, and the meaning of philosophy; and the theory of Gnosticism as basic to radical modernity. He also provides a powerful account of the spirit of Voegelin's later writings, contrasting the political scientist with the meditative spiritualist and offering new insight into volume 5 of *Order and History*.

Republicanism, Religion, and the Soul of America concludes with timely reflections on the epoch now unfolding in the shadow of Islamic jihadism. Bringing a wide range of materials into a single volume, it confronts current academic concerns with religion while offering new insight into the construction of the American polity—and the heart of Americanism as we know it today.

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