

Religion in Ohio: Profiles of Faith Communities. Edited by Tarunjit Singh Butalia and Dianne P. Small (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2004. 408 pp. \$16.95, ISBN: 0821415522).

This book celebrates Ohio's religious heritage after 200 years of statehood. It is the result of a collaborative effort by the Religious Experience Advisory Council of the Ohio Bicentennial Commission and the Interfaith Association of Central Ohio

Within the book the reader will find a brief history of over forty of the major (and some major-minor) Christian denominations in the state, as well as a history of nine non-Christian religions which have found a home in Ohio (Native American Spiritual Traditions, Judaism, Islam, Hindu Dharma, Buddhism, The Sikh Faith, The Bahá'í Faith, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism). The articles are generally written by adherents of each faith, or, in the case of groups no longer in the state (Shakers, Society of Separatists at Zoar), by a scholar familiar with them. There is a detailed index covering both articles and illustrations, and a brief biographical sketch of contributors.

The editors have done an excellent job in establishing parameters and focus for the 50 some contributors. Each article contains the history, beliefs, current demographics, contact information, and resources for the particular faith. The individual Christian groups have between four to eight pages to tell their stories (regardless of the size of the denomination). The non-Christian faiths, for whatever reason, are detailed in longer articles. Christian denominations, individually or in theological groupings, are presented alphabetically, more or less. Non-Christian groups seem to be listed more according to when they first organized in Ohio. In any event, the Table of Contents makes it easy enough to locate a particular religious tradition.

According to the editors, some faith groups chose not to respond when asked about inclusion in the book. Moreover, one does not find included various splinter groups and the dimensions of the independent church and megachurch movements within the state. It is to the credit of editors that they did not try to be overly inclusive. If they had done so the text would have been distracting for many readers.

Donald Huber's introductory "More Than Two Centuries of Religion in Ohio" is particularly good. It presents a broad historical context, and does excellent work in tying together the presentations which follow. The denominational/faith articles are of uneven quality, but always clear enough for the general reader to understand. And give a tip of our collective hats to the proofreaders. They did their job well. For someone wanting a slice of Ohio religion at the beginning of the twenty-first century, *Religion in Ohio* is informative and a good place to start.

G. Richard Kern
Emeritus Professor of History
University of Findlay