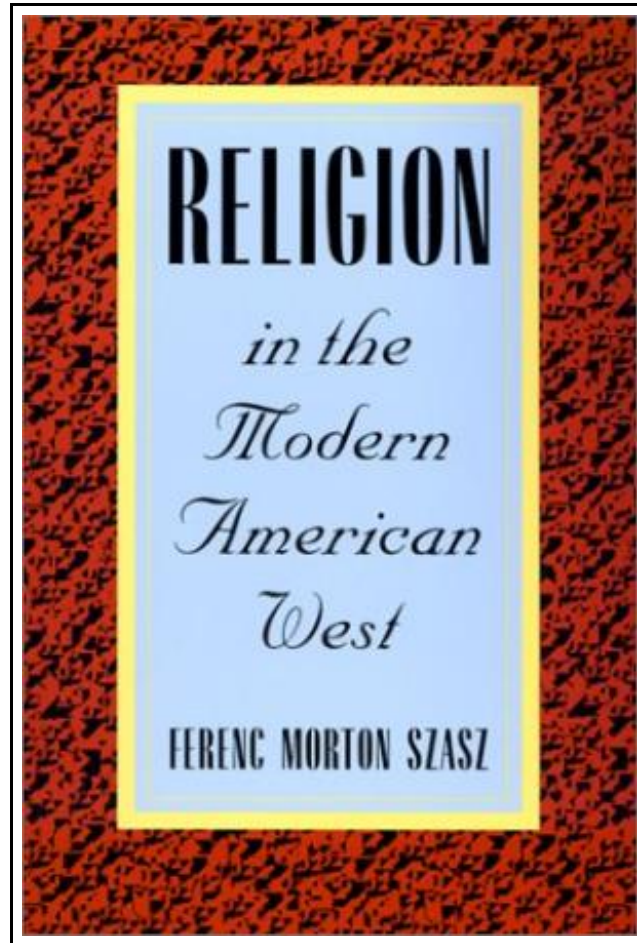


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University of Arizona Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Religion in the Modern American West, Ferenc Morton Szasz, When Americans migrated west, they carried with them not only their hopes for better lives but their religious traditions as well. Yet the importance of religion in the forging of a western identity has seldom been examined. In this first historical overview of religion in the modern American West, Ferenc Szasz shows the important role that organized religion played in the shaping of the region from the late-nineteenth to late-twentieth century. He traces the major faiths over that time span, analyzes the distinctive response of western religious institutions to national events, and shows how western cities became homes to a variety of organized faiths that cast only faint shadows back east. While many historians have minimized the importance of religion for the region, Szasz maintains that it lies at the very heart of the western experience. From the 1890s to the 1920s, churches and synagogues created institutions such as schools and hospitals that shaped their local communities; during the Great Depression, the Latter-day Saints introduced their innovative social welfare system; and in later years, Pentecostal groups carried their traditions to the Pacific coast and Southern Baptists (among others) set out in earnest to evangelize the Far West. Beginning in the 1960s, the arrival of Asian faiths, the revitalization of evangelical Protestantism, the ferment of post-Vatican II Catholicism, the rediscovery of Native American spirituality, and the emergence of New Age sects combined to make western cities such as Los Angeles and San Francisco among the most religiously pluralistic in the world. Examining the careers of key figures in western religion, from Rabbi William Friedman to Reverend Robert H. Schuller, Szasz balances specific and general trends to weave the story of religion into...



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