

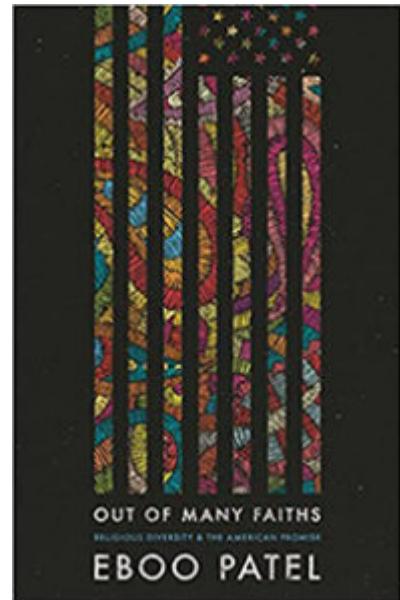
Review: Out of Many Faiths

March 10, 2020

Out of Many Faiths: Religious Diversity & the American Promise

By Eboo Patel (Princeton University Press)

The United States benefits from its religious diversity and its religious vitality—and the two traits are inextricably linked, Eboo Patel maintains. He believes diversity is America's defining dynamic, he insists. Furthermore, religious pluralism thrives and religious devotion flourishes in an environment where citizens not only feel free to practice their particular religious faith, but also respect the rights of their neighbors to hold drastically different beliefs.



Patel—founding president of Interfaith Youth Core—offers a stirring call for interfaith cooperation and understanding, while at the same time encouraging a strong sense of particular religious identity. “Put simply, without strong individual threads, there is no fabric of pluralism,” he writes.

As an American Muslim, Patel acknowledges the challenges followers of Islam face in the United States today, particularly in light of what he calls “the Islamophobia industry in the White House” and President Trump’s “anti-Muslim rhetoric.” But as an optimist, Patel chooses to focus on how

the United States in general responded to earlier challenges by broadening its self-identity from “white Protestant” to include Jews and Catholics. He calls for a new narrative expansive enough to include Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and even the religious “nones.”

In one of three essays written in response to Patel and included in the book, Laurie L. Patton answers that challenge, focusing on foundational narratives that “invoke a wider sense of ‘we’” and that have the compelling poetic imagery to capture the imagination and inspire ethical reflection.

Patel offers a thought-provoking exploration of religious liberty viewed through the prism of a minority faith and a hopeful look at the challenges America must face.

Ken Camp, managing editor

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