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Sommario/riassunto

Academic and popular opinions agree that Canadian public life has become wholly secularized during the last hundred years. As this book acknowledges, religion has indeed lost most of its influence in education, politics and various interest groups. But this rigorously researched volume argues that religion was one of the early institutional bases of the public sphere, and although it has since become differentiated from the state, it should not be overlooked or underestimated by historians and sociologists of modern Canada. A compilation of scholarly case studies, it addresses the continuing influence of religion on modern, 'secular' institutions and thus on shaping communal identities. Van Die's book brings together some of Canada's leading historians of religion - including an entry by distinguished US historian, Mark Noll. Religion and Public Life in Canada shows an awareness of the effects of issues such as gender, ethnicity, and regionalism, and considers the recent influence of previously 'outsider' religions such as Judaism and Sikhism. By challenging the assumption that religion has become a matter only of private concern, and by showing its historical and continued relevance to public life, the book takes the debate over secularization on to an entirely new plane of concern.
