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Norwegian Ecclesiastical Affiliation in Three Countries: a Challenge to Earlier Hi

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Historians like Oscar Handlin and Timothy L. Smith asserted that international migration, especially that of European immigrants, was a process which reinforced traditional religious loyalties. In harmony with this supposed verity, a venerable postulate of Scandinavian-American scholarship was that most Norwegian immigrants in the New World (the overwhelming majority of whom were nominal members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway) clung to their birthright religious legacy and affiliation after crossing the Atlantic (although for many decades it has been acknowledged that by contrast, vast numbers of Danish-American counterparts did not join analogous ethnic Lutheran churches). In the present article, however, it is argued that anticlericalism and alienation from organised religious life were widespread in nineteenth-century Norway, where new religious denominations were also proliferating. Furthermore, in accordance with these historical trends, the majority of No

States of America and Southern Africa did not affiliate with Lutheran churches. Significant minorities joined Baptist and Lutheran religious fellowships, but the majority did not become formally affiliated with either Norwegian or pan-S



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