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Review of America's Prophet: Moses and the American Story

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LJ Review Cover Sheet and Survey

Your name: Michael F. Russo

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Title of the book: *America's Prophet: Moses and the American Story*

Author or editor of the book: Bruce Feiler

This book is recommended for: students of the Bible; students of American history; public & academic libraries

Comments for your editor: *Margaret, I will have to take a hiatus for a bit. I will get back in touch when I am in a better position to devote time to reviewing.*

Review

Author: Bruce Feiler

Title: *America's Prophet: Moses and the American Story*

Publisher: William Morrow

Release date: October 2009

Number of pages: 368

Features: 20 black-and-white photos

Format: Hard cover

ISBN: 978-0-06-057488-8

Price: \$26.99

Many books that examine the influence of the Bible on American society focus on controversies such as the true meaning of Genesis (*Storms over Genesis: Biblical Battleground in America's Wars of Religion* by William H. Jennings, Fortress Press 2007) and Christmas displays (*War on Christmas : How the Liberal Plot to Ban the Sacred Christian Holiday Is Worse Than You Thought* by John Gibson, Sentinel 2005). Others, such as Melanie J. Wright's *Moses in America: the Cultural Uses of Biblical Narrative* (Oxford, 2003), relate the Bible to aspects of popular culture. The latest book by bestselling author Bruce Feiler, *America's Prophet: Moses and the American Story*, goes in neither direction. *America's Prophet*, rather, starts from the unique thesis of Moses as Founding Father: in a nutshell, the story of Moses is the story of America. *America's Prophet* is part history and part religious study, examining the American cycle of oppression, followed by inspired leadership, and culminating in the sometimes violent journey toward freedom. From William Bradford and George Washington to Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, Jr., the United States of America has been a nation of many Moseses. Moses has been the example—the reluctant leader giving voice and vision to those with neither, the very human being who ultimately fails, after so many trials, to reach the Promised Land. Feiler (*Abraham, Walking the Bible*) gives us the history of American struggle—from the Pilgrims escaping religious persecution to slaves seeking human dignity to European Jews fleeing anti-Semitism to African-Americans demanding equal rights—and gives it in the same straightforward, readable style of his

previous work. Nevertheless, the book possesses a depth and a gravitas that belie the accessible text, attributable to the numerous authorities—religious and civic leaders, historians, and many others—interviewed for the book. VERDICT: Students of the Bible as well as students of American history will find insight in the connections Feiler makes between Moses and America’s story. Academic and public libraries will both want to add this volume to their religious studies collections.

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