

Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives

Nancy T. Ammerman



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Scholars once predicted a bleak existence for religion in the modern world. Social progress, they argued, meant doing away with religion and its antiquated control over our lives. Religion, however, is actually thriving in pluralistic and complex societies, and its continued vibrancy-even resurgence--demands a reevaluation of ideas about secularization.

Nancy T. Ammerman has assembled a diverse and interdisciplinary group of scholars to provide a critical observation of modern religion in action. This collection of previously unpublished essays approaches modern religion at its most fundamental levels and brings the reader into the presence of religious practice among the complexities of daily life. The authors take aim at the failure of secularization theories to explain why and how people continue to choose religion in the midst of modernity. Each essay combines a portrait of religious activity in often-unexpected places with an evaluation of currently dominant theories to offer a fresh alternative perspective.

From media to politics to family and civic life, these scholars look for the ways religion crosses boundaries and compare its effects in different cultural and institutional situations. These insightful essays identify a new approach to the study of religion, one that emphasizes individual experience and social context over fixed categories and statistical equations.

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