

Culture and Religion in International Relations

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Roland Benedikter

Religion in the Age of Re-Globalization

A Brief Introduction

Foreword by Mark Juergensmeyer, Ralph Wilbur Hood

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FOREWORD BY MARK JUERGENSMEYER

For over a hundred years, some of the best minds in the Western world have predicted the end of religion. It was the “sigh of the oppressed,” thought Karl Marx, something that would disappear when people understood the real conditions of their oppression. It was an “illusion,” stated Sigmund Freud, and Friedrich Nietzsche proclaimed that “God is dead.”

Yet in the twenty-first century, in the era of globalization, God seems quite alive, and religion is thriving. Perhaps the two are related—the rise of globalization and the resurgence of religion in public life—as this book artfully demonstrates. The emergence of strident forms of religious and ethnic nationalism are responses, in part, to the erosion of confidence in the European Enlightenment’s vision of secular nationalism and the transnational forces that transcend the nation-state.

But it is not the same old religion that has revived. These new forms of politicized religion are creatures of the globalized present moment. And at the same time, new forms of religiosity have emerged that provide indications of the religion of the future. One of the fastest growing religious identities is that of the “nones”—people who, when asked, do not identify themselves as Christian, Jewish, Muslim, or even atheist or agnostic, but “none.” When asked they will often say that they are “spiritual, not religious.” The implication is that there is a form of non-traditional spirituality that is sweeping the world, one with no name and no orthodoxy. But it is often associated with deep moral values—an ascription to human

rights and a concern about environmental protection—and a sense of harmony with all peoples on the planet.

It is an exciting time to think about religion. Perhaps seldom in world history has it exploded into such diverse new formulations. And the future is open: religion could ossify into defensive xenophobia or broaden into the ascription of universal human values. At present, both trends, contradictory though they may be, are developing side by side.

This book provides a sweeping overview of these diverse developments in the global age. It is perhaps more a map than a monograph, since its intention is to give the broad picture, the contours and shapes of emerging religiosities, rather than to plumb deeply into any one of them. The reader may want to locate him or herself in this conceptual landscape, or wander into unfamiliar terrain, for there is much yet to be explored. To undertake this journey is something of an adventure, and this book will provide the landmarks for the fascinating facets to be discovered.

Mark Juergensmeyer
Distinguished Professor of Sociology
and Global Studies
Former Director, Orfalea Center for
Global and International Studies
Editor of *The Oxford Handbook of
Global Religion* (2006)
Co-author of *God in the Tumult of the
Global Square: Religion in Global Civil
Society* (2015)
Co-editor of the *Encyclopedia of Global
Studies* (2012)

FOREWORD BY RALPH WILBUR HOOD

This is a wonderful guidebook to what is happening with religion and re-globalization worldwide. Benedikter provides an amazing wealth of information. It is as if one had a travel guide to the entire world with very brief summaries of the key places one could visit. I have not read a book that packs so much information in such few pages. Benedikter knows where all the “hot spots” are and invites the reader to use the guidebook or map for where to explore issues in depth that intrigue them. The book is not only up to date but engages such rapidly changing issues as the Covid-19 pandemic, world economies and changes in forms of religious expressions that seem torn from the most recent headlines or twitter feeds. The range of scholarship is amazing, as Benedikter provides insights into the immensely complicated phenomena of religion and re-globalization. The text reads not simply as an academic treatise, but as a detective novel in which the only thing that is certain is that being certain is not simply premature but foolish. Benedikter documents that the renaissance of religion in its fundamental forms is only one occurrence among many others, some progressive rather than regressive.

This book is unique in the breadth, range and scope of its treatment of religion in the age of re-globalization and as a “map” or “travel guide” has no equal. It is likely to be adopted in many upper graduate and graduate

college courses from sociology, to political science, to international relations and religious studies. In addition, one could cite even more courses not to mention the wide appeal to simply inquisitive readers. This book is a gem.

Ralph Wilbur Hood
Leroy A. Martin Distinguished
Professor of Religious Studies
Author of *The Psychology of Religious
Fundamentalism* (2005)
Co-Editor of *The Psychology of Religion:
An Empirical Approach* (1985)
Co-Editor of *Semantics and Psychology
of Spirituality: A Cross-Cultural
Analysis* (2015)

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book provides a concise introduction to 21 trends that are currently transforming the role of religion in “re-globalizing” settings, i.e., in times of “deep” global change. Inter- and transdisciplinary in its approach, clearly structured and easy to read, this book analyzes the impact of religious rhetoric, practice and self-understanding into the five typological core fields of contemporaneity: economics, politics, culture, demography and technology. Vice versa, it describes the effects of developments in these fields on religion and its perspectives. Referring to a vast variety of examples, this book provides an overview of the main transformations religion is undergoing both in open societies and (neo-)authoritarian settings. It combines the “big picture” with accuracy for detail and concrete cases. This book is ideally suited for classrooms and teaching and can serve as a concentrated basis of discussion for civil society members, public servants and everybody interested in the topic, either with or without previous knowledge.

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