



The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation

Rodney Stark, William Sims Bainbridge

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Religion is alive and well in the modern world, and the social-scientific study of religion is undergoing a renaissance. For much of this century, respected social theorists predicted the death of religion as inevitable consequence of science, education, and modern economics. But they were wrong.

Stark and Bainbridge set out to explain the survival of religion. Using information derived from numerous surveys, censuses, historical case studies, and ethnographic field expeditions, they chart the full sweep of contemporary religion from the traditional denominations to the most fervent cults. This wealth of information is located within a coherent theoretical framework that examines religion as a social response to human needs, both the general needs shared by all and the desires specific to those who are denied the economic rewards or prestige enjoyed by the privileged. By explaining the forms taken by religions today, Stark and Bainbridge allow us to understand its persistence in a secular age and its prospects for the future,

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