



Lived Religion in America: Toward A History of Practice

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At once historically and theoretically informed, these essays invite the reader to think of religion dynamically, reconsidering American religious history in terms of practices that are linked to specific social contexts. The point of departure is the concept of "lived religion." Discussing such topics as gift exchange, cremation, hymn-singing, and women's spirituality, a group of leading sociologists and historians of religion explore the many facets of how people carry out their religious beliefs on a daily basis. As David Hall notes in his introduction, a history of practices "encompasses the tensions, the ongoing struggle of definition, that are constituted within every religious tradition and that are always present in how people choose to act. Practice thus suggests that any synthesis is provisional."

The volume opens with two essays by Robert Orsi and Danièle Hervieu-Léger that offer an overview of the rapidly growing study of lived religion, with Hervieu-Léger using the Catholic charismatic renewal movement in France as a window through which to explore the coexistence of regulation and spontaneity within religious practice. Anne S. Brown and David D. Hall examine family strategies and church membership in early New England. Leigh Eric Schmidt looks at the complex meanings of gift-giving in America. Stephen Prothero writes about the cremation movement in the late nineteenth century. In an essay on the narrative structure of Mrs. Cowman's *Streams in the Desert*, Cheryl Forbes considers the devotional lives of everyday women. Michael McNally uses the practice of hymn-singing among the Ojibwa to reexamine the categories of native and Christian religion. In essays centering on domestic life, Rebecca Kneale Gould investigates modern homesteading as lived religion while R. Marie Griffith treats home-oriented spirituality in the Women's Aglow Fellowship. In "Golden-Rule Christianity," Nancy Ammerman talks about lived religion in the American mainstream.

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