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*Sociology of Religion: Contemporary Developments.*  
Kevin J. Christiano, William H. Swatos Jr. and Peter  
Kivisto. Reviewed by Ram A. Cnaan.

Ram A. Cnaan  
*University of Pennsylvania*

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reflect the power of her findings. Yet this book forces the reader to at least consider her argument that researchers' emotions can be a critical source of knowledge rather than a negative form of bias.

Perhaps the success of Campbell's work hinges on its ability to emotionally engage the reader. The preface immediately captures the reader's attention with a highly disturbing rape story that Campbell herself experienced as a pivotal moment in her research process, and the book is full of stories of a similar chilling quality. These rape stories don't come across as gratuitous shock value. On the contrary, they lead the reader to construct a vision of how rape emotionally impacts the rape victim and all those who hear her story. I began reading this book while I was coincidentally at a conference in Chicago, and I vividly recall the book's impact on my own emotions while walking alone through the dimly lit city streets. Throughout the book, the reader can really sense the impact of rape in tandem with the victims and the researchers' experiences. I believe all researchers can benefit from this book, regardless of their orientation to quantitative or qualitative methods, positivism or postmodernism. For essentially Campbell's work is a powerful testimony to our own humanity, as researchers, in the process of building knowledge about real-life social problems.

Laura S. Abrams

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Kevin J. Christiano, William H. Swatos Jr. and Peter Kivisto, *Sociology of Religion: Contemporary Developments*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2002. \$44.95 papercover.

The sociological study of religion is witnessing an academic revival. The inclusion of religious issues in explaining social phenomena is mounting. More and more social scientists realize the need to include religious variables in their work. Kevin J. Christiano, William H. Swatos Jr. and Peter Kivisto are anything but new comers to this field. Each one has devoted many years to the study of religion and together they have begun to provide us with a roadmap of religion in America since the 1960s.

The study of religion in secular-academic circles is both difficult and challenging. The authors use Martin E. Marty's statement

that religion both “motivates [the] most killing in the world today” and “contributes to [the] most healing in the world today” (p. 51). Any force that commands so much power over humanity is worthy of major studying. One of the unique qualities of this text is its ability to introduce the novice to the topic by focusing on contemporary issues rather than historical ones. This quality makes the book relevant and interesting for the intended audience—students in introductory courses of sociology of religion. However, this focus also has drawbacks. Developments that have occurred recently make some of the text outdated and in need of revision. Since the book was published, the scandal of Catholic priests’ pedophilia has burst, the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiative was established, and new decisions by the Supreme Court about vouchers have been made. The positive side of the book’s lack of current events shows that its focus on contemporary issues is justified and students will see how relevant the topic is for everyone in America.

In *Sociology of Religion: Contemporary Developments*, Christiano, Swatos, and Kivisto provide an interesting overview of the role religion plays in modern America and how it shapes us and how we shape religion. After two introductory chapters on the meaning of religion and how sociologists study religion, they move to cover nine key issues including: theories of secularization, religion in America compared to the rest of the world, class issues, ethnic composition, feminism, the specific role of the Roman Catholic church, fundamentalist and evangelical groups, changes in religion in America in the past 40 years, and new religions. I particularly enjoyed the chapter on mediating meaning (how religion is marketed and the business of publishing and disseminating religion). These chapters are all comprehensive, yet, easy to follow and provide the major trends and thoughts in these areas of study. Each chapter begins with a theoretical discussion and ends with data and discussion about the specific topic in America today. For example, the chapter on religion in America presents the “church” and “sect” theories and reviews the literature on denominationalism while the chapter on fundamentalism and evangelism also reviews the issue of globalization.

Making choices as to what to include and what to exclude is always difficult and leaves others dissatisfied. Given the focus on

contemporary issues, I was disappointed not to find a chapter on the role of religion in social services provision. While the White House Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives and President George W. Bush's involvement in this area came at the tail end of the writing of this book, Charitable Choice passed congress in 1996 and paved the way for a renewed role for religion in the field of welfare. The authors mention President George W. Bush's pre-election religious statements twice but ignored his and Al Gore's call for the inclusion of religion in public welfare. Furthermore, even the role of traditional players such as Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, and Jewish family services are not highlighted.

Another void in the book is the role of the clergy. Over half a million Americans serve as clergy in various capacities and are held in special esteem and respect. The role religion plays in everyday life in America is mostly through local congregations. This basic sociological unit and what it does to foster community life is understudied. Also absent is the ever present debate between those advocating "creationism" versus those who advocate "evolution." Regardless of these omissions, Christiano, Santos, and Kivisto provide us with an excellent book on the sociology of religion. The many topics they elected to cover are well designed and provide a variety of view points.

The authors aim at college students as their audience and have provided us with a helpful textbook that can be the backbone of every course on the sociology of religion. Focusing on contemporary issues makes the topics more amenable to young students and the many side bars are well chosen and easy to follow. Even the photos, most of them by William H. Swatos, Jr., are most helpful and wisely inserted.

Ram A. Cnaan  
University of Pennsylvania

William Roth, *The Assault on Social Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002. \$49.50 hardcover, \$22.50 paper cover.

I am proud of William Roth for writing this book. It takes courage to author a book in the year 2002 that suggests a replacement for capitalism. While the economic system of capitalism is