



A History of the World's Religions

By David S. Noss, Blake Grangaard

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A History of the World's Religions bridges the interval between the founding of religions and their present state, and gives students an accurate look at the religions of the world by including descriptive and interpretive details from the original source materials.

Refined by over forty years of dialogue and correspondence with religious experts and practitioners around the world, *A History of the World's Religions* is widely regarded as the hallmark of scholarship, fairness, and accuracy in its field. It is also the most thorough yet manageable history of world religion available in a single volume, treating many subjects largely neglected in other texts.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

David S. Noss taught in the Religion and Philosophy Department of Heidelberg College from 1950 until his retirement in 1989, although he continued teaching students and advising faculty until his passing in 2010.

Blake Grangaard earned his B.A. from St. Olaf College, M.Div. from Luther Theological Seminary and Ph.D. from Union Theological Seminary in Virginia. He was a church pastor for almost 10 years before turning to academia.

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Preface *Get the Noss book,* a teacher told me years ago. It was good advice then, and I hope it will continue to be good advice. Now in its thirteenth edition, *A History of the World's Religions* has a history of its own. John Noss spent more than a decade researching and writing the first edition, published in 1949 as *Man's Religions*. His much younger brother, David, played a small part, typing one of the chapters. That was not the end of David's association with the book. When John died, in 1980, the seventh edition was in preparation. David had already consulted on previous editions, and the seventh included his name on the title page. Through subsequent editions he reworked prose, emended and added material, and broadened the scope of the book to give special attention to the role of religion in social conflicts and international tension. By the tenth edition the publisher convinced him the book had become *his*, so his name alone would be on the title page. I was relieved when David told me his first intention upon taking on this book was *not to mess it up.* I feel the same way. So it is appropriate to be mindful of the book's purpose, i.e., to be a one-volume history of religion, directed to teachers and students. As David expressed it in the most recent editions:

My elder brother, John B. Noss, spent ten years preparing the first (1949) edition of this book. At that time he found that most publications in the field tended to focus on the biographies of the founders and then jumped to comparing and evaluating their contemporary practices. His preface to the first edition spoke of two special needs to be met: the first was to include *descriptive and interpretative details from the original source materials*, and second *to bridge the interval between the founding of religions and their present state*. *Italics mine.*

Those who have used successive editions will recognize an increasing attentiveness to those needs. Primary source materials are not spliced in as undigested chunks but carefully introduced with interpretative introductions. As color-highlighted quotations, primary sources gain even more of the prominence they deserve. Key quotations are highlighted in color-framed brackets. Illustrations now play a larger part: in addition to samples of classic art and architecture, new photographs furnish more samples from pop art, depictions of ceremonial regalia, explanations of ritual practices, and scenes of believer engagement toward social betterment. Extended *teaching captions* go beyond perfunctory identifications of the subject.

WHAT'S NEW TO THIS EDITION

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appear in shaded sidebars. * The Bardo Thodol (the much-heard-of Tibetan Book of the Dead) receives attention. * A new full-color design enhances the reading experience * MyReligionLab provides additional activities for both students and instructors SUPPORT FOR INSTRUCTOR(S) AND STUDENTS *

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