

why is religion important to society

why is religion important to society is a question that has intrigued scholars, historians, and sociologists for centuries. Religion has played a pivotal role in shaping cultures, moral values, and social structures throughout human history. It influences laws, ethical behavior, and community cohesion, providing a framework for understanding the world and humanity's place within it. This article explores the multifaceted importance of religion in society, examining its social, psychological, cultural, and ethical impacts. By understanding the reasons behind religion's significance, one gains insight into how it continues to influence both individual lives and collective human progress. The discussion will be organized into main sections covering social cohesion, moral guidance, cultural identity, psychological benefits, and contributions to social services.

- Religion as a Foundation for Social Cohesion
- Moral and Ethical Guidance Provided by Religion
- The Role of Religion in Cultural Identity
- Psychological and Emotional Benefits of Religion
- Religion's Contribution to Social Services and Community Support

Religion as a Foundation for Social Cohesion

Religion serves as a crucial element in fostering social cohesion by creating shared beliefs and practices that unite individuals within a community. The collective rituals, ceremonies, and traditions often associated with religion strengthen bonds among members, promoting a sense of belonging and

mutual support.

Shared Beliefs and Practices

Religious doctrines and rituals provide common ground for people, establishing a collective identity. These shared beliefs help individuals align their values and behaviors, which can reduce conflicts and encourage cooperation.

Community Building and Social Networks

Religious institutions often act as centers for social interaction, facilitating the formation of networks that support social stability. Through regular gatherings, worship services, and events, religion fosters relationships that extend beyond spiritual matters into everyday life.

Promotion of Social Order

By encouraging adherence to moral codes and social norms, religion contributes to maintaining social order. Many societies have historically derived their legal systems and social regulations from religious teachings, reinforcing societal stability.

Moral and Ethical Guidance Provided by Religion

One of the primary reasons why religion is important to society is its role in establishing moral frameworks. Religious teachings often define concepts of right and wrong, guiding individuals toward ethical conduct and responsibility.

Establishing Moral Values

Religions typically articulate principles such as compassion, justice, honesty, and respect for others. These values not only shape personal behavior but also influence societal expectations and norms.

Accountability and Purpose

Religious beliefs in divine judgment or karmic consequences encourage accountability for one's actions. This sense of spiritual responsibility can motivate individuals to act ethically, fostering trust and fairness within communities.

Influence on Legal Systems

Many legal codes around the world have been inspired by religious morals, highlighting the historical connection between faith and law. This influence persists in contemporary societies, where religious ethics continue to inform debates on justice and human rights.

The Role of Religion in Cultural Identity

Religion plays a vital role in shaping and preserving cultural identity, connecting individuals to their heritage and collective history. It acts as a vessel for transmitting traditions, language, and customs across generations.

Preservation of Traditions

Religious festivals, rituals, and narratives often serve as cultural markers that maintain a society's unique character. By participating in these traditions, communities reinforce their distinct identities and values.

Integration of Art and Literature

Religion inspires a vast array of artistic expressions, including architecture, music, literature, and visual arts. These cultural artifacts contribute to societal identity and provide continuity between past and present.

Facilitating Social Integration

For many communities, religion acts as a unifying force that integrates diverse groups under a common cultural umbrella, promoting social harmony and collective pride.

Psychological and Emotional Benefits of Religion

Religion also offers significant psychological support and emotional resilience to individuals within society. Through faith and spiritual practices, people find meaning, comfort, and hope in times of adversity.

Providing Meaning and Purpose

Religious beliefs often address existential questions about life, death, and the universe, helping individuals to find purpose and direction. This can enhance mental well-being and reduce feelings of alienation.

Emotional Support and Coping Mechanisms

Participation in religious activities and communities provides emotional support networks. Prayer, meditation, and rituals can serve as coping mechanisms that alleviate stress, anxiety, and grief.

Encouraging Positive Behavior

Religion frequently promotes forgiveness, gratitude, and altruism, which contribute to emotional health and interpersonal harmony within society.

Religion's Contribution to Social Services and Community

Support

Beyond spiritual matters, religion plays an active role in providing social services and fostering community welfare. Religious organizations often mobilize resources to address societal needs and improve quality of life.

Charitable Activities and Humanitarian Aid

Many faith-based groups engage in charitable activities such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and providing disaster relief. These efforts help to alleviate poverty and suffering on local and global scales.

Education and Healthcare Initiatives

Religious institutions frequently establish schools, hospitals, and clinics, contributing to public education and health care. These services are essential components of social development and wellbeing.

Promoting Social Justice

Religious leaders and organizations have historically been at the forefront of movements advocating for human rights, equality, and social justice. Their involvement helps to address systemic issues and

promote societal progress.

- Fostering social cohesion through shared beliefs and rituals
- Providing moral and ethical frameworks
- Preserving cultural identity and traditions
- Offering psychological and emotional support
- Delivering social services and promoting social justice

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is religion considered important for social cohesion?

Religion often provides a shared set of beliefs and values that help unite individuals within a society, fostering a sense of community and belonging.

How does religion influence moral and ethical behavior in society?

Religion typically offers guidelines and principles that shape individuals' sense of right and wrong, promoting ethical behavior and social order.

In what ways does religion contribute to cultural identity?

Religion is deeply intertwined with cultural traditions, rituals, and practices, helping preserve and transmit cultural heritage across generations.

Can religion play a role in providing emotional support to society members?

Yes, religion often offers comfort, hope, and meaning during difficult times, helping individuals cope with stress, loss, and uncertainty.

How does religion impact laws and governance in society?

Many legal systems and governance structures have been influenced by religious principles, shaping laws related to justice, human rights, and social responsibilities.

Why is religion important in promoting charitable activities and social welfare?

Religious teachings frequently emphasize compassion and helping others, motivating followers to engage in charity, philanthropy, and community service.

How does religion help address existential questions in society?

Religion provides answers to fundamental questions about life, purpose, death, and the universe, offering individuals a framework to understand their existence.

Additional Resources

1. The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion

Peter L. Berger explores how religion provides a framework for social order and meaning. The book argues that religion creates a "sacred canopy" that shelters societies from chaos by offering shared beliefs and values. Berger examines the role of religion in maintaining social cohesion and legitimizing institutions.

2. Religion and Society: An Introduction

This book offers a comprehensive overview of the relationship between religion and society. It discusses how religious beliefs influence social norms, laws, and cultural practices. The text also covers the functions of religion in community building and social control.

3. Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age

Robert N. Bellah traces the development of religion from early human history to the rise of major world religions. He explains how religion has played a crucial role in shaping social structures and moral systems over time. The book highlights religion's importance in fostering cooperation and social integration.

4. The Role of Religion in Society: A Sociological Perspective

This book examines how religion contributes to social stability and change. It analyzes various sociological theories on religion's function in society, including its role in identity formation and conflict resolution. The author also discusses contemporary challenges faced by religious institutions.

5. Religion and Social Order

In this work, the author explores the ways religion underpins societal norms and ethical codes. The book emphasizes religion's role in promoting social solidarity and collective conscience. Case studies illustrate how different religions influence governance and community life.

6. Faith and Community: The Social Importance of Religion

This title investigates how religious communities foster social networks and support systems. It discusses the psychological and social benefits of religious participation. The book also explores how faith-based organizations contribute to social welfare and civic engagement.

7. The Social Functions of Religion

This book delves into the various functions religion serves within societies, including providing meaning, enforcing moral behavior, and facilitating social integration. The author uses historical and contemporary examples to demonstrate religion's enduring significance. It also addresses the interplay between religion and other social institutions.

8. *Religion, Culture, and Society: A Global Perspective*

Offering a cross-cultural analysis, this book examines how religion shapes social customs and cultural identities worldwide. It highlights the diversity of religious expressions and their social implications. The author discusses religion's role in both conflict and peacebuilding efforts.

9. *Why Religion Matters: The Impact of Faith on Social Life*

This book argues that religion continues to be a vital force in shaping moral values and social behavior. It explores the ways religion influences politics, education, and community cohesion. The author presents evidence that religious beliefs and practices remain central to many societies' functioning.

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why is religion important to society: On the Significance of Religion for Global Diplomacy Philip McDonagh, Kishan Manocha, John Neary, Lucia Vázquez Mendoza, 2020-11-04
What could it mean, in terms of strengthening multilateral diplomacy, if the UN, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union, and other regional diplomatic frameworks engaged more creatively with a religious perspective? In this ground-breaking volume it is argued that international organisations, backed by governments, can and should use their convening power to initiate new, multi-layered frameworks of engagement, inclusive of the representatives of religion. This can make multilateralism more fit for purpose and have a major impact over time on our planetary future. The book is divided into an introduction and six chapters: Towards a culture of encounter inclusive of the world's religious traditions Structural questions in 21st-century diplomacy Knowing what we ought to know: the issues that face 21st-century diplomacy Towards the global objective of a common peace for humanity Understanding how change happens The diplomacy of the two standards The development of new frameworks of engagement A brief outline is offered of what an all-European initiative – an agora for Europe – might look like if, in the 2020s, there were the political will to inaugurate a European regional process reflecting the orientation and methodology proposed in the book. Combining cutting-edge research and reflection, with concrete recommendations for academics, religious actors, policy makers, and practitioners, this concise and accessible volume helps to build bridges between these oftentimes separated spheres of engagement. The Open Access version of this book, available at <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003053842>, has been made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 license.

why is religion important to society: The Role and Meaning of Religion for Korean

Society Song-Chong Lee, 2019-04-25 This special issue presents discussions of the role and meaning of religion for Korean society. Covering wide-ranging time periods, the authors explore with their own cases four major characteristics of Korean religion: Creativity, Greater Responsiveness, Adaptability, and Prophethood. Their topical religious traditions include Neo-Confucianism, Christianity, Buddhism, and Korean new religious movements.

why is religion important to society: Religion in the Twenty-first century and beyond: A Social sciences perspective Sujay Rao Mandavilli, 2024-04-19 The term Religion refers to a wide range of social-cultural systems, which include beliefs, morals, ethics, religious practices, thought worlds, worldviews, holy texts and scriptures, sanctified holy places, and institutions that typically relate to the general belief in a God or a supernatural entity. Religion has been known in a wide variety of geographical contexts and situations, and attested since very early times; as a matter of fact, even before the dawn of human civilization. As a matter of fact, there have been very few known human societies without some form of an organized or an informal religion. In the past few centuries, technology has progressed at a rapid pace, and at a rate that would have been unimaginable just two centuries ago. Many pundits predicted that the role played by religion in society would invariably and inevitably diminish; alas, such prophecies have not come to pass. Religion, and the role played by it in society, remains as deeply entrenched as ever before. As a matter of fact, globalization has unleashed a clash of civilizations, and has brought different and widely differing ideologies into direct contact with each other, often unleashing waves of terror. In the wide array and assortment of papers that we have been publishing over the years, we have introduced many different concepts that we believe can greatly help in understanding the role religion plays in relation to society. Readers can easily reference these papers. In this paper, we attempt to take our endeavours to a much higher level, to analyse how the beneficial aspects of religion can be magnified and amplified, and the negative implications of religion curtailed. We also lay out the contours of social science research that can effectively tackle the menace of religious fanaticism and hatred, and draw out a road map and a course of action other researchers and scholars can easily relate to. This is far from an easy task, but sociologists and anthropologists have a major role to play here. Hence, this oeuvre. Other researchers and scholars must contribute in no small measure, and those belonging to different parts of the world, and hailing from different backgrounds and cultures. There are fundamental schisms in today's scholarship, and interdisciplinary and cross-cultural enterprise is still sparse. The Author once had a Muslim friend (highly educated) who was more interested in Greek civilization than in Islam. The Author had another Muslim friend (less educated) who was a devout Muslim: He did not even know how old Islam was, and neither had he read the Qu'ran fully. Therefore, we must avoid stereotypes and accept the fact that we are living in a multicultural world and in a multispeed civilization. The clash of civilizations is also a fact, though it must be eventually mitigated. Halloween parties in Saudi Arabia, and anti-Mullah rhetoric in Iran may be reactionary belligerent displays of wrath; meaningful and permanent change must be brought about only through the realm of social sciences. Many eminent sociologists of yore studied different forms of religion studiously and diligently, even with some kind of an implicit or a feverish reverence or veneration, yet many other scholars today are of an atheistic disposition, tending to write of the utility of religion in the modern world. Why this disconnect? These are all issues we need to ruminate and ponder over, if we are to solve social problems, and build a meaningful and a deep-rooted edifice of research. We also need original thinkers, not legions of camp followers of the west, to use an aphorism by Sir CV Raman, who was the first Indian to bring home the Nobel prize in science. Intellectuals and thinkers must be aligned to social requirements, and must be sensitive to cultural factors. Otherwise, the words of Carl Jung will come into play, "The deep critical thinker has become the misfit of the world, this is not a coincidence. To maintain order and control, you must isolate the intellectual, the sage, the philosopher, the savant before their ideas awaken people," or as CS Lewis states, The greatest evils in the world are not carried out by men with guns, but by men in suits sitting behind desks." Esoterism and nerdism appear to be the bane in various academic disciplines. As Daniel Dennett put

it, many philosophers pursue isolated paths, and dedicate their intellect purely to age-old ideas without considering the advancements of modern science. Scholars also do not think through issues deeply and comprehensively enough. However, change must be brought about slowly, and in a graduated fashion. It must be brought about tactfully and diplomatically, without trampling on people's sensitivities. As William Shakespeare put it, "Go wisely and slowly. Those who rush stumble and fall." We also need "objectivity in mindset", otherwise all attempts at scientific progress will fail. Even the best or the most advanced and uptodate software cannot date the Ramayana or the Mahabharata accurately if objectivity in mindset does not exist. Change can however be brought about. As Jose Andres once famously stated, The modernity of yesterday is the tradition of today, and the modernity of today will be tradition tomorrow.

why is religion important to society: The Question is Why Pasquale De Marco, The Question is Why is a thought-provoking exploration of the profound questions that have captivated humankind for millennia: the nature of belief, the relationship between faith and reason, the meaning of life, and the role of religion in society. With intellectual rigor and a keen eye for detail, Pasquale De Marco delves into the depths of religious thought, examining diverse perspectives and engaging with the works of leading philosophers, theologians, and scholars. This book offers a comprehensive overview of the major themes and debates in the philosophy of religion, making it an invaluable resource for students, scholars, and anyone seeking a deeper understanding of religious belief and its impact on human existence. The Question is Why is a masterful synthesis of scholarship and insight, providing readers with a fresh perspective on the enduring questions that continue to shape our world. Written in an engaging and accessible style, The Question is Why is a compelling read for anyone interested in the intersection of religion, philosophy, and human experience. Pasquale De Marco skillfully weaves together historical and contemporary insights, offering a nuanced and thought-provoking exploration of the human condition. This book is a must-read for anyone seeking to expand their understanding of religion's role in shaping individual and societal values, beliefs, and behaviors. With its comprehensive coverage of key topics, The Question is Why is an essential resource for students and scholars of religious studies, philosophy, and theology. It is also an enlightening read for general readers seeking to deepen their understanding of the complex relationship between religion and human existence. Pasquale De Marco invites readers on an intellectual journey that challenges assumptions, broadens perspectives, and ultimately leads to a deeper appreciation of the human quest for meaning and purpose. Furthermore, The Question is Why is a timely and important contribution to the ongoing dialogue about the role of religion in the 21st century. As societies grapple with issues of diversity, globalization, and technological advancement, this book offers a thoughtful and nuanced exploration of religion's enduring influence on human affairs. Pasquale De Marco provides readers with the tools they need to navigate these complex issues and engage in meaningful conversations about the future of religion in an increasingly interconnected world. If you like this book, write a review!

why is religion important to society: Religion, Culture & Society Andrew Singleton, 2014-03-10 The reader is taken on a global exploration of the forms and diversities of religions and their social and cultural contexts... It is up to the minute in research and theory, and comfortably grounded in the traditions of the social explanation of things religious and spiritual. - Gary Bouma AM, Monash University Tells how sociology of religion originated in the work of key nineteenth and twentieth century theorists and then brings the story into the present era of globalization, hybrid spirituality, and the Internet. Students of religion will find this an engaging and informative survey of the field. - Robert Wuthnow, Princeton University It considers the 'big questions' - What is religion? How is religion changing in a modern world? What is the future of religion? - and addresses them through tangible case studies and observations of contemporary life. Its global perspective reflects the breadth, diversity and vibrancy of this field. - Sylvia Collins-Mayo, Kingston University This is a rich and dynamic introduction to the varieties of religious life and the central issues in the sociology of religion today. It leads the reader through the key ideas and main debates within the field as well as offering in-depth descriptions and analysis of topics such as secularization,

fundamentalism, Pentecostal Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, atheism, 'The spiritual marketplace', digital religion and new religions like Wicca. Emphasising religion as a global phenomenon, examining especially the ways in which globalization has had an impact on everyday religious life, Singleton has created an illuminating text suitable for students in a wide range of courses looking at religion as a social and cultural phenomenon.

why is religion important to society: Why Religion and Spirituality Matter for Public Health Doug Oman, 2018-05-08 This volume reviews the exploding religion/spirituality (R/S) and health literature from a population health perspective. It emphasizes the distinctive Public Health concern for promoting health and preventing disease in societies, nations, and communities, as well as individuals. Part I offers a rigorous review of mainstream biomedical and social scientific theory and evidence on R/S-health relations. Addressing key gaps in previous literature, it reviews evidence from a population health viewpoint, surveying pertinent findings and theories from the perspective of Public Health subfields that range from Environmental Health Sciences to Public Health Nutrition to Health Policy & Management and Public Health Education. In Part II, practitioners describe in detail how attending to R/S factors enhances the work of clinicians and community health practitioners. R/S provides an additional set of concepts and tools to address opportunities and challenges ranging from behavior and institutional change to education, policy, and advocacy. Part III empowers educators, analyzing pedagogical needs and offering diverse short chapters by faculty who teach R/S-health connections in many nationally top-ranked Schools of Public Health. International and global perspectives are highlighted in a concluding chapter and many places throughout the volume. This book addresses a pressing need for Public Health research, practice and teaching: A substantial evidence base now links religious and spiritual (R/S) factors to health. In the past 20 years, over 100 systematic reviews and 30 meta-analyses on R/S-health were published in refereed journals. But despite this explosion of interest, R/S factors remain neglected in Public Health teaching and research. Public Health lags behind related fields such as medicine, psychology, and nursing, where R/S factors receive more attention. This book can help Public Health catch up. It offers abundant key resources to empower public health professionals, instructors, and students to address R/S, serving at once as a course text, a field manual and a research handbook.

why is religion important to society: Encyclopedia of Religion and Society William H. Swatos, 1998 As the new millennium approaches, the sacred and profane interface, conflict, and intermingle in novel ways. The Encyclopedia of Religion and Society provides a guide map for these developments. From succinct, brief notes to essay-length entries, it covers world religions, religious perspectives on political and social issues, and religious leaders and scholars -- present and past -- in the United States and the world. This comprehensive volume is an essential reference for studies in the anthropology, psychology, politics, and sociology of religion. Topics include: abortion, adolescence, African-American religious experience, anthropology of religion, Buddhism, commitment, conversion, definition of religion, ecology movement, Emile Durkheim, ethnicity, fundamentalism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, new religious movements, organization, parish, Talcott Parsons, racism, research methods, Roman Catholicism, sexism, Unification Church, Max Weber, and many others.

why is religion important to society: Human Nature and the Evolution of Society Stephen K. Sanderson, 2018-05-04 If evolution has changed humans physically, has it also affected human behavior? Drawing on evolutionary psychology, sociobiology, and human behavioral ecology, Human Nature and the Evolution of Society explores the evolutionary dynamics underlying social life. In this introduction to human behavior and the organization of social life, Stephen K. Sanderson discusses traditional subjects like mating behavior, kinship, parenthood, status-seeking, and violence, as well as important topics seldom included in books of this type, especially gender, economics, politics, foodways, race and ethnicity, and the arts. Examples and research on a wide range of human societies, both industrial and nonindustrial, are integrated throughout. With chapter summaries of key points, thoughtful discussion questions, and important terms defined within the text, the result is a broad-ranging and comprehensive consideration of human society, thoroughly grounded in an

evolutionary perspective.

why is religion important to society: *Why Religion? Towards a Critical Philosophy of Law, Peace and God* Dawid Bunikowski, Alberto Puppo, 2020-02-11 This book examines the relation between religion and jurisprudence, God, and peace respectively. It argues that in order to elucidate the possible role religion can play in the contemporary world, it is useful to analyse religion by associating it with other concepts. Why peace? Because peace is probably the greatest promise made by religions and the greatest concern in the contemporary world. Why jurisprudence? Because, quoting Kelsen's famous book *Peace through Law*, peace is usually understood as something achievable by international legal instruments. But what if we replace *Peace through Law* with *Peace through Religion*? Does law, as an instrument for achieving peace, incorporate a religious dimension? Is law, ultimately, a religious and normative construction oriented to peace, to the protection of humanity, in order to keep humans from the violence of nature? Is the hope for peace rational, or just a question of faith? Is religion itself a question of faith or a rational choice? Is the relatively recent legal concept of "responsibility to protect" a secular expression of the oldest duty of humankind? The book follows the structure of interdisciplinary research in which the international legal scholar, the moral philosopher, the philosopher of religion, the theologian, and the political scientist contribute to the construction of the necessary bridges. Moreover, it gives voice to different monotheistic traditions and, more importantly, it analyses religion in the various dimensions in which it determines the authors' cultures: as a set of rituals, as a source of moral norms, as a universal project for peace, and as a political discourse.

why is religion important to society: *Religion and Law* Peter W. Edge, 2017-03-02 Discussion of the way in which law engages with religious difference often takes place within the context of a single jurisdiction. *Religion and Law: An Introduction*, presents a comprehensive text for students, drawing on examples from across key Anglophone jurisdictions - the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, as well as international law, to explore a broad range of issues. Aimed at a non-legal readership, this book introduces the use of legal sources and focuses on factual situations as much as legal doctrine. Key issues arising from interaction of the religious individual and the State are discussed, as well as the religious organisation or community and the State. The interaction is explored through case studies of areas as diverse as the legal regulation of religious drug use, sacred spaces and sacred places, and claims of clergy misconduct. Taking a broad, non-jurisdictional approach to the key issues, in particular providing insights differing from the dominant US experiences and paradigms, this student-friendly textbook includes a clearly structured bibliography and clear guidance on how to approach relevant legal materials.

why is religion important to society: *The Biological Evolution of Religious Mind and Behavior* Eckart Voland, Wulf Schiefenhövel, 2009-08-12 In a Darwinian world, religious behavior - just like other behaviors - is likely to have undergone a process of natural selection in which it was rewarded in the evolutionary currency of reproductive success. This book aims to provide a better understanding of the social scenarios in which selection pressure led to religious practices becoming an evolved human trait, i.e. an adaptive answer to the conditions of living and surviving that prevailed among our prehistoric ancestors. This aim is pursued by a team of expert authors from a range of disciplines. Their contributions examine the relevant physiological, emotional, cognitive and social processes. The resulting understanding of the functional interplay of these processes gives valuable insights into the biological roots and benefits of religion.

why is religion important to society: *Religion Matters* William A. Mirola, Michael O. Emerson, Susanne C Monahan, 2016-01-08 *Religion Matters: What Sociology Teaches Us About Religion in Our World* is organized around the biggest questions that arise in the field of sociology of religion. This is a new text for the sociology of religion course. Instead of surveying this field systematically, the text focuses on the major questions that generate the most discussion and debate in the sociology of religion field.

why is religion important to society: *The Language of Faith in Southern Africa: Spirit*

World, Power, Community, Holism Hermen Kroesbergen, 2019-12-12 The aim of this book is to provide a way to do justice to an African language of faith. In systematic theology, anthropology and philosophy of religion, similar debates about how to interpret an African language of faith are ongoing. Trying to avoid the "othering" discourses of past generations, scholars are careful to take seriously what people in Africa say without portraying people's beliefs as weird or backward. Yet, in their desperate attempts to avoid othering, these theologians, anthropologists and philosophers often painfully misconstrue the language of faith in Africa. Understanding the language of faith in Southern Africa is not an easy task. How should we take seriously the form of language that often seems so strange and different? I argue that, after African inculturation theology and black liberation theology, a better way to make sense of being a Christian in Southern Africa is to pay close attention to people's language of faith. The way in which people speak of the spirit world or powers in Africa appears strange to outsiders, and the sense of community and the holistic worldview differentiates the African way of life from its Euro-American counterparts. When proper attention is paid to the use of concepts like spirit world, power, community and holism, language of faith in Southern Africa is neither as strange as it may seem, nor as romantic. By investigating these distinguishing concepts that colour language of faith in Southern Africa, this book contributes to future projects of both fellow theologians who try to construct a contemporary African theology and those who are interested in theology in Africa given the well-known southward shift of the centre of gravity of Christianity.

why is religion important to society: Religion and Belief Tony Lawson, Joan Garrod, Tim Heaton, 2009-02-09 Religion, belief and faith influence many areas of all our lives, whether we follow a particular doctrine or not. But are people becoming less religious in the modern age? Is religion a social construction? And what do key sociological theorists say about religion? This book examines the sociology of religion. Looking at belief systems around the world, the text questions and explores changing attitudes to religion, alongside issues such as secularization, fundamentalism and globalization. In particular, this text: - Explores contemporary and classic theory - Describes key practices and beliefs of particular faith groups - Investigates social characteristics associated with religious belief and participation - Discusses various approaches to the organisation of religion, from traditional institutions to sects and cults. Part of the successful Skills-Based Sociology series, Religion and Belief provides readers with the opportunity to build their knowledge whilst putting their understanding into practice. The book's clear structure, helpful exercises and exam guidance make this an invaluable resource for students new to the study of religion in society.

why is religion important to society: Rulers, Religion, and Riches Jared Rubin, 2017-02-16 This book seeks to explain the political and religious factors leading to the economic reversal of fortunes between Europe and the Middle East.

why is religion important to society: Sociology John E. Farley, Michael W. Flota, 2017-10-02 This best-selling textbook returns for a seventh edition with material on the most fundamental and fascinating issues in sociology today. The authors continue their tradition of focusing on the big picture, with an emphasis on race, class, and gender in every chapter. The text continues to frame sociological debates around the major theoretical perspectives of sociology and focus on capturing students' imaginations with cutting-edge research and real-world events. The hallmark of the book continues to be clear writing that helps students understand the intricacies of the discipline like no other textbook on the market. New to the seventh edition Expanded focus on new social movements such as Black Lives Matter, Occupy Wall Street, and the Tea Party. Updates on both the 2012 and 2016 elections. New discussions of Donald Trump and the immigration debate; causes and consequences. New discussions of patriot movements, racism, and the reaction to the first African American president. Expanded coverage of sexual orientation and LGBT issues. Updates on gay rights and the historic legalization of same-sex marriage. New sections on cyber life discussion issues such as cyber bullying and public shaming; WikiLeaks, Edward Snowden, and NSA spying; sexting and youth culture; the Arab Spring; and social media activism. New coverage of the so-called he-cession and the rise of women managers (whom employers still see as risky but, increasingly, as

highly talented). Updates on health-care reform, five years on and the efforts to repeal and replace Obamacare. Expanded coverage of mass shootings and the corresponding policy debates. Expanded coverage and new focus on police-involved shootings and gun control in the Deviance, Crime, and Social Control chapter. New discussions of the sociology of finance, including the role of financial derivatives in the 2008 global financial crisis. New photos and updated figures and tables throughout the text.

why is religion important to society: *Invented Religions* Professor Carole M Cusack, 2013-06-28 Utilizing contemporary scholarship on secularization, individualism, and consumer capitalism, this book explores religious movements founded in the West which are intentionally fictional: Discordianism, the Church of All Worlds, the Church of the SubGenius, and Jediism. Their continued appeal and success, principally in America but gaining wider audience through the 1980s and 1990s, is chiefly as a result of underground publishing and the internet. This book deals with immensely popular subject matter: Jediism developed from George Lucas' Star Wars films; the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, founded by 26-year-old student Bobby Henderson in 2005 as a protest against the teaching of Intelligent Design in schools; Discordianism and the Church of the SubGenius which retain strong followings and participation rates among college students. The Church of All Worlds' focus on Gaia theology and environmental issues makes it a popular focus of attention. The continued success of these groups of Invented Religions provide a unique opportunity to explore the nature of late/post-modern religious forms, including the use of fiction as part of a bricolage for spirituality, identity-formation, and personal orientation.

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American Sociological Association in 1959. David Heer's biography of Kingsley Davis is based on material contained in the Kingsley Davis Archive at the Hoover Institution Library at Stanford University, the Kingsley Davis graduate file at Harvard University, the interview of Kingsley Davis by Jean van der Tak in *Demographic Destinies* (1990), and David Heer's personal relationship with Kingsley Davis. The book also contains thirty of the most important writings by Kingsley Davis. These were chosen, in part, for the number of citations received in the Cumulative Social Science Citation Index, and in part to ensure that readers would be able to assess the continuity of Kingsley Davis's ideas at all stages of his career.

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