

# Pop Culture Wars Religion And The Role Of Entertainment In

The Journal of Popular Culture Culture Wars A Profound Weakness Popular Evangelicalism in American Culture Understanding Religion and Popular Culture The True History of Lyndie B. Hawkins The Gospel according to The Simpsons, Bigger and Possibly Even Better! Edition Beyond Culture Wars Star Wars and Philosophy Culture Wars Closing of the American Mind Religion and Popular Culture in America Risky Business Religion and the Culture Wars Libraries & Culture Christotainment Eyes Wide Open iPod, YouTube, Wii Play A War for the Soul of America The Trouble with Nature That Old-time Religion in Modern America Not Your Mother's Morals Don't Stop Believin' Pop Culture Wars Pop Goes Religion The Story of Ferdinand Authentic Fakes Understanding Evangelical Media The Rise and Fall of the Religious Left Religion and Popular Culture Kill All Normies First Things A Consumer's Guide to the Apocalypse Culture, Identities and Technology in the Star Wars Films Christianity and the Mass Media in America Reforming Hollywood Why Liberals Win the Culture Wars (Even When They Lose Elections) Culture Wars and Enduring American Dilemmas Practicing Religion in the Age of the Media Science, Religion, and the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence

## The Journal of Popular Culture

### Culture Wars

Featuring hundreds of A-Z entries and numerous photos, the set examines the history and relevance of the issues, events, controversies, personalities, groups, and concepts that have contributed to the political and social polarization of American society over recent decades. It details hot-button topics as well as the role of the media in defining and shaping these issues--everything from abortion, the Christian Coalition, the environmental movement, feminism, and gay rights, to illegal aliens, pornography, stem-cell research, Watergate, and zero tolerance. A topic finder, bibliography, and index add to the set's utility.

### A Profound Weakness

For more than two thousand years Christian expansion and proselytizing was couched in terms of 'defending the faith'. Until recently in the United States, much of that defense came in the form of reactions against the 'liberal' influences channeled through big-corporate media such as popular music, Hollywood movies, and network and cable television. But the election of Ronald Reagan as a Hollywood President introduced Christian America to the tools of advertising and multimedia appeals to children and youth to win new believers to God's armies. Christotainment examines how Christian fundamentalism has realigned its armies to combat threats against it by employing the forces it once considered its chief enemies: the entertainment media, including movies, television, music, cartoons, theme parks, video games, and books. Invited contributors discuss the critical theoretical frameworks of top-selling devices within Christian pop culture and the

appeal to masses of American souls through the blessed marriage of corporatism and the quest for pleasure.

### **Popular Evangelicalism in American Culture**

Released in May 1977, the original Star Wars movie inaugurated the age of the movie blockbuster. It also redefined the use of cinematic special effects, creating a new textual universe that now stretches through three decades, two trilogies and generations of fascinated viewers. The body of critical analysis that has developed from this epic focuses primarily on the Star Wars universe as a contemporary myth. However, like any fiction, it must also be viewed—and consequently analyzed—as a product of the culture which created it. The essays in this book analyze the Star Wars trilogies as a culturally and historically specific phenomenon. Moving away from the traditional myth-based criticism of the films, the essayists employ a cultural studies model to examine how this phenomenon intersects with social formations such as economics, technology, race and gender. Critical approaches are varied and include political and economic analysis informed by feminism, contemporary race theory, Marxism, new media studies and post-humanism. Among the topics covered are the connections between the trilogies and our own cultural landscape; the problematic issues of race and gender; and the thematic implications of Lucas' presentation of technology. Instructors considering this book for use in a course may request an examination copy [here](#).

### **Understanding Religion and Popular Culture**

Popular culture can no longer be exclusively seen as a source of escapism. It can amuse, entertain, instruct, and relax people, but what if it provides inspiration for religion? The Church of All Worlds, the Church of Satan and Jediism from the Star Wars series are but three examples of new religious groups that have been greatly inspired by popular culture to (re)create a religious message. These are hyper-real religions, that is a simulacrum of a religion partly created out of popular culture which provides inspiration for believers/consumers. These postmodern expressions of religion are likely to be consumed and individualised, and thus have more relevance to the self than to a community and/or congregation. On the other hand, religious fundamentalist groups tend, at times, to resist this synergy between popular culture and religion, and at other times, re-appropriate popular culture to promote their own religion. Examples of this re-appropriation are Christian superhero comics and role playing games, Bible-based PC games, and 'White Metal' music. To explore these new phenomena, this book views itself as the 'hyper-real testament' of these new religious phenomena by addressing the theories, among many others, of Baudrillard, Jameson and Lipovetsky, and by exploring the use of fictions such as those from Harry Potter, The Matrix, Star Trek, Buffy and The Lord of the Rings.

### **The True History of Lyndie B. Hawkins**

In this 'image journal' and textbook, the contemporary artist Betty Spackman takes us on a guided tour of her collection of the images and objects that represent the Christian faith in popular culture. Having set out to critique these poor relations of

ecclesiastical art, she finds herself torn between being deeply moved and outraged by their sentimental appeal. Her gentle deconstructions and playful permutations elicit new life from them to illustrate her observations, and to surprise and at times unsettle the reader. A closing questionnaire prompts further reflection. This is a book that can help us greatly to make sense of the pictures that unwittingly may have shaped our faith or unfaith. It is highly recommended for artists, teachers, preachers, youth leaders, parents and spiritual counsellors. Book jacket.

## **The Gospel according to The Simpsons, Bigger and Possibly Even Better! Edition**

### **Beyond Culture Wars**

For decades now, Americans have believed that their country is deeply divided by “culture wars” waged between religious conservatives and secular liberals. In most instances, Protestant conservatives have been cast as the instigators of such warfare, while religious liberals have been largely ignored. In this book, L. Benjamin Rolsky examines the ways in which American liberalism has helped shape cultural conflict since the 1970s through the story of how television writer and producer Norman Lear galvanized the religious left into action. The creator of comedies such as All in the Family and Maude, Lear was spurred to found the liberal advocacy group People for the American Way in response to the rise of the religious right. Rolsky offers engaged readings of Lear’s iconic sitcoms and published writings, considering them as an expression of what he calls the spiritual politics of the religious left. He shows how prime-time television became a focus of political dispute and demonstrates how Lear’s emergence as an interfaith activist catalyzed ecumenical Protestants, Catholics, and Jews who were determined to push back against conservatism’s ascent. Rolsky concludes that Lear’s political involvement exemplified religious liberals’ commitment to engaging politics on explicitly moral grounds in defense of what they saw as the public interest. An interdisciplinary analysis of the definitive cultural clashes of our fractious times, *The Rise and Fall of the Religious Left* foregrounds the foundational roles played by popular culture, television, and media in America’s religious history.

### **Star Wars and Philosophy**

The role of motion pictures in the popularity of rock music became increasingly significant in the latter twentieth century. Rock music and its interaction with film is the subject of this significant book that re-examines and extends Serge Denisoff's pioneering observations of this relationship. Prior to Saturday Night Fever rock music had a limited role in the motion picture business. That movie's success, and the success of its soundtrack, began to change the silver screen. In 1983, with Flashdance, the situation drastically evolved and by 1984, ten soundtracks, many in the pop/rock genre, were certified platinum. Choosing which rock scores to discuss in this book was a challenging task. The authors made selections from seminal films such as The Graduate, Easy Rider, American Graffiti, Saturday Night Fever, Help!, and Dirty Dancing. However, many productions of the period are significant not because of their success, but because of their box office and record

store failures. *Risky Business* chronicles the interaction of two major mediums of mass culture in the latter twentieth century. This book is essential for those interested in communications, popular culture, and social change.

### **Culture Wars**

As the 20th Century draws to a close, cultural conflict plays an increasingly dominant role in American politics, with religion acting as a catalyst in the often bitter confrontations ranging from abortion to public education. These insightful essays by leading scholars in the field examine the role of religion in these 'culture wars' and present a mixed assessment of the scope and divisiveness of such conflicts.

### **Closing of the American Mind**

Recent years have seen a revival of the heated culture wars of the 1990s, but this time its battle ground is the internet. On one side the "alt right" ranges from the once obscure neo-reactionary and white separatist movements, to geeky subcultures like 4chan, to more mainstream manifestations such as the Trump-supporting gay libertarian Milo Yiannopolous. On the other side, a culture of struggle sessions and virtue signalling lurks behind a therapeutic language of trigger warnings and safe spaces. The feminist side of the online culture wars has its equally geeky subcultures right through to its mainstream expression. *Kill All Normies* explores some of the cultural genealogies and past parallels of these styles and subcultures, drawing from transgressive styles of 60s libertinism and conservative movements, to make the case for a rejection of the perpetual cultural turn.

### **Religion and Popular Culture in America**

Arranged chronologically from 1950 to the present, this accessible work explores the theological themes in 101 well-established figures and trends from film, television, video games, music, sports, art, fashion, and literature.

### **Risky Business**

The mass media and religious groups in America regularly argue about news bias, sex and violence on television, movie censorship, advertiser boycotts, broadcast and film content rating systems, government regulation of the media, the role of mass evangelism in a democracy, and many other issues. In the United States the major disputes between religion and the media usually have involved Christian churches or parachurch ministries, on the one hand, and the so-called secular media, on the other. Often the Christian Right locks horns with supposedly liberal Eastern media elite and Hollywood entertainment companies. When a major Protestant denomination calls for an economic boycott of Disney, the resulting news reports suggest business as usual in the tensions between faith groups and media empires. Schultze demonstrates how religion and the media in America have borrowed each other's rhetoric. In the process, they have also helped to keep each other honest, pointing out respective foibles and pretensions. Christian media

have offered the public as well as religious tribes some of the best media criticism— better than most of the media criticism produced by mainstream media themselves. Meanwhile, mainstream media have rightly taken particular churches to task for misdeeds as well as offered some surprisingly good depictions of religious life. The tension between Christian groups and the media in America ultimately is a good thing that can serve the interest of democratic life. As Alexis de Tocqueville discovered in the 1830s, American Christianity can foster the “habits of the heart” that ward off the antisocial acids of radical individualism. And, as John Dewey argued a century later, the media offer some of our best hopes for maintaining a public life in the face of the religious tribalism that can erode democracy from within. Mainstream media and Christianity will always be at odds in a democracy. That is exactly the way it should be for the good of each one.

### **Religion and the Culture Wars**

Popular Evangelicalism in American Culture explores the controversies, complexities, and historical development of the evangelical movement in America and its impact on American culture. Evangelicalism is one of the most dynamic and growing religious movements in America and has been both a major force in shaping American society and likewise a group which has resisted aspects of the modern world. Organised thematically this book demonstrates the impact of American culture on popular evangelicalism by exploring the following topics: □politics; □economics; □salvation; millennialism; □the megachurch and electronic churches; □and popular culture. This accessible and thought-provoking volume will interest anyone concerned with the modern-day success of the Evangelical movement in America.

### **Libraries & Culture**

The Closing of the American Mind, a publishing phenomenon in hardcover, is now a paperback literary event. In this acclaimed number one national best-seller, one of our country's most distinguished political philosophers argues that the social/political crisis of 20th-century America is really an intellectual crisis. Allan Bloom's sweeping analysis is essential to understanding America today. It has fired the imagination of a public ripe for change.

### **Christotainment**

As long as there has been a church, there has been Christian communication--"people of the book" bearing "the good news" from one place to another, persuading, teaching and even delighting an ever-broadening audience with the message of the gospel. Amid ongoing advances in technology and an ever-more-multicultural context, however, the time has come for a broad appraisal of the state of evangelical communications. Quentin Schultze and Robert H. Woods Jr. have assembled scholars from across the country to analyze and assess a wide range of media including radio popular music worship music and media television film periodicals books Internet church drama comics gaming theme parks advertising public relations merchandising These shifting media, and the communications enterprise as a whole, are put in cultural and ethical perspective.

Also addressed are Catholic and Jewish perspectives on the state of religious media. This project is ongoing. For additional resources and further conversation, visit [understandingevangelicalmedia.com](http://understandingevangelicalmedia.com).

### **Eyes Wide Open**

#### **iPod, YouTube, Wii Play**

PRAISE FOR THE FIRST EDITION: "A solid introduction to the dialogue between the disciplines of cultural studies and religion.... A substantive foundation for subsequent exploration."—Religious Studies Review "A splendid collection of lively essays by fourteen scholars dealing with religion and popular culture on the contemporary American scene."—Choice

#### **A War for the Soul of America**

Johnny Cash, Harry Potter, the Simpsons, and John Grisham. What do all of these icons in pop culture have to do with faith? Find the answer in *Pop Goes Religion*; relevant insight into the world of today's entertainment. In this collection of essays, popular American journalist, Terry Mattingly teaches readers how to identify elements of faith in today's pop culture. Topics include: God & Popular Music Faith & the Big Screen God on TV Ink, Paper, and God Politics and Current Events From music to movies, politics to the pope, Mattingly explores the matters of the heart with a fresh and relevant perspective.

#### **The Trouble with Nature**

Lancaster provides the disproof of evolutionary stories about men, women, and the nature of desire of the heterosexual fables that pervade popular culture, from prime-time sitcoms to scientific theories about the so-called gay gene.

#### **That Old-time Religion in Modern America**

Is there anything holy in Springfield, the home to irascible Bart Simpson and his naive dad Homer, their enthusiastic evangelical neighbor Ned Flanders, the sourpuss minister Rev. Lovejoy, and the dozens of other unique characters who inhabit the phenomenally popular TV show? In this revision of the 2001 bestseller, author Mark Pinsky says yes! In this entertaining and enlightening book, Pinsky shows how *The Simpsons* engages issues of religion and morality in a thoughtful, provocative, and genuinely respectful way. With three new chapters and updates to reflect the 2001-2006 seasons, Pinsky has given a thorough facelift to the book that Publishers Weekly called "thoughtful and genuinely entertaining." The new material includes chapters on Buddhism and gay marriage and an extensive afterword that explores how religion is treated on the animated shows that have followed in the footsteps of *The Simpsons*: *South Park*, *Family Guy*, *Futurama*, *American Dad*, and *King of the Hill*.

#### **Not Your Mother's Morals**

Entertainment has long been a source of controversy in American life. On the one hand, American popular culture is enormously desired, captivating audiences around the world. On the other hand, more and more critics blame it for the breakdown of morals and even civilizations itself. Surely Christians and other religious citizens have something to contribute to what is, after all, a discussion of morality. But too often their contributions have been ill-informed, unreflective and reactionary. In this groundbreaking book, William Romanowski brings something desperately needed to the discussion: an informed, systematic and challenging Christian perspective. Comprehensive and historically revealing, *Pop Culture Wars* bids to accomplish nothing less than to reframe and render more constructive a crucial but angry cultural debate.

### **Don't Stop Believin'**

In this timely, carefully reasoned social history of the United States, the New York Times bestselling author of *Religious Literacy* and *God Is Not One* places today's heated culture wars within the context of a centuries-long struggle of right versus left and religious versus secular to reveal how, ultimately, liberals always win. Though they may seem to be dividing the country irreparably, today's heated cultural and political battles between right and left, Progressives and Tea Party, religious and secular are far from unprecedented. In this engaging and important work, Stephen Prothero reframes the current debate, viewing it as the latest in a number of flashpoints that have shaped our national identity. Prothero takes us on a lively tour through time, bringing into focus the election of 1800, which pitted Calvinists and Federalists against Jeffersonians and "infidels;" the Protestants' campaign against Catholics in the mid-nineteenth century; the anti-Mormon crusade of the Victorian era; the fundamentalist-modernist debates of the 1920s; the culture wars of the 1980s and 1990s; and the current crusade against Islam. As Prothero makes clear, our culture wars have always been religious wars, progressing through the same stages of conservative reaction to liberal victory that eventually benefit all Americans. Drawing on his impressive depth of knowledge and detailed research, he explains how competing religious beliefs have continually molded our political, economic, and sociological discourse and reveals how the conflicts which separate us today, like those that came before, are actually the byproduct of our struggle to come to terms with inclusiveness and ideals of "Americanness." To explore these battles, he reminds us, is to look into the soul of America—and perhaps find essential answers to the questions that beset us.

### **Pop Culture Wars**

When twelve-year-old Lyndie and her parents must move to her grandparents' home in small-town Tennessee in 1985, having to keep all family problems private only adds to their problems.

### **Pop Goes Religion**

An introductory textbook which provides students with a variety of approaches for analysing religion and popular culture, covering areas such as food, violence,

music, television and videogames.

### **The Story of Ferdinand**

Authentic Fakes explores the religious dimensions of American popular culture in unexpected places: baseball, the Human Genome Project, Coca-Cola, rock 'n' roll, the rhetoric of Ronald Reagan, the charisma of Jim Jones, Tupperware, and the free market, to name a few. Chidester travels through the cultural landscape and discovers the role that fakery—in the guise of frauds, charlatans, inventions, and simulations—plays in creating religious experience. His book is at once an incisive analysis of the relationship between religion and popular culture and a celebration of the myriad ways in which invention can stimulate the religious imagination. Moving beyond American borders, Chidester considers the religion of McDonald's and Disney, the discourse of W.E.B. Du Bois and the American movement in Southern Africa, the messianic promise of Nelson Mandela's 1990 tour to America, and more. He also looks at the creative possibilities of the Internet in such phenomena as Discordianism, the Holy Order of the Cheeseburger, and a range of similar inventions. Arguing throughout that religious fakes can do authentic religious work, and that American popular culture is the space of that creative labor, Chidester looks toward a future "pregnant with the possibilities of new kinds of authenticity."

### **Authentic Fakes**

"Irene Taviss Thomson gives us a nuanced portrait of American social politics that helps explain both why we are drawn to the idea of a 'culture war' and why that misrepresents what is actually going on." ---Rhys H. Williams, Professor and Chair, Department of Sociology, Loyola University Chicago "An important work showing---beneath surface conflict---a deep consensus on a number of ideals by social elites." ---John H. Evans, Department of Sociology, University of California, San Diego The idea of a culture war, or wars, has existed in America since the 1960s---an underlying ideological schism in our country that is responsible for the polarizing debates on everything from the separation of church and state, to abortion, to gay marriage, to affirmative action. Irene Taviss Thomson explores this notion by analyzing hundreds of articles addressing hot-button issues over two decades from four magazines: National Review, Time, The New Republic, and The Nation, as well as a wide array of other writings and statements from a substantial number of public intellectuals. What Thomson finds might surprise you: based on her research, there is no single cultural divide or cultural source that can account for the positions that have been adopted. While issues such as religion, homosexuality, sexual conduct, and abortion have figured prominently in public discussion, in fact there is no single thread that unifies responses to each of these cultural dilemmas for any of the writers. Irene Taviss Thomson is Professor Emeritus of Sociology, having taught in the Department of Social Sciences and History at Fairleigh Dickinson University for more than 30 years. Previously, she taught in the Department of Sociology at Harvard University.

### **Understanding Evangelical Media**

Originally published: New York: Viking Press, 1936.

## **The Rise and Fall of the Religious Left**

In this cogent history, Hart unpacks evangelicalism's current reputation by tracing its development over the course of the 20th century. He shows how evangelicals entered the century as full partners in the Protestant denominations and agencies that molded American cultural and intellectual life.

## **Religion and Popular Culture**

The Star Wars films continue to revolutionize science fiction, creating new standards for cinematographic excellence, and permeating popular culture around the world. The films feature many complex themes ranging from good versus evil and moral development and corruption to religious faith and pragmatism, forgiveness and redemption, and many others. The essays in this volume tackle the philosophical questions from these blockbuster films including: Was Anakin predestined to fall to the Dark Side? Are the Jedi truly role models of moral virtue? Why would the citizens and protectors of a democratic Republic allow it to descend into a tyrannical empire? Is Yoda a peaceful Zen master or a great warrior, or both? Why is there both a light and a dark side of the Force? *Star Wars and Philosophy* ponders the depths of these subjects and asks what it truly means to be mindful of the "living force."

## **Kill All Normies**

Should Christians w00t or wail about the scope and power of modern entertainment? Maybe both. But first, Christians should think theologically about our human passion to be entertained as it relates to the popular culture that entertains us. Avoiding the one-size-fits-all celebrations and condemnations that characterize the current fad of pop culture analyses, this book engages entertainments case by case, uncovering the imaginative patterns and shaping power of our amusements. Individual chapters weave together analyses of entertainment forms, formats, technologies, trends, contents, and audiences to display entertainment as a multifaceted formational ecology.

## **First Things**

"[Fitzgerald] explains how the new sincerity movement in contemporary pop culture is making way for moral storytelling in unlikely places." —Jonathan Merritt, author of *Learning to Speak God from Scratch In Not Your Mothers Morals*, Jonathan D. Fitzgerald argues that today's popular music, movies, TV shows, and books are making the world a better place. For all the hand-wringing about the decline of morals and the cheapening of culture in our time, contemporary media brims with examples of fascinating and innovative art that promote positive and uplifting moral messages—without coming across as preachy. The catch? Today's moral messages can be quite different than the ones your mother taught you. Fitzgerald compares the pop culture of yesterday with that of today and finds that while both are committed to major ideals—especially God, Family, and

Country—the nature of those commitments has shifted. In his witty, expressive style, Fitzgerald explains how we've arrived at the era of New Sincerity and why its good news for our future. "A great, quick read . . . jam-packed with explorations of art, politics, media and pop culture that show how we've moved from being June Cleaver's society to being one that begs you to just tell it to us like it is—flaws and questions and all . . . Jonathan's book puts all of the proverbial pieces together into one witty journey that will light up any culture lover's brain." —The Good Men Project "Jonathan Fitzgerald is an astute observer of Christianity in Western culture. By turning 'conventional wisdom' on its head, he shows us some truth we would not otherwise have seen." —Tony Jones, author of *The New Christians*

## **A Consumer's Guide to the Apocalypse**

What accounts for the apocalyptic angst that is now so clearly present among Americans who do not subscribe to any religious orthodoxy? Why do so many popular television shows, films, and music nourish themselves on this very angst? And why do so many artists--from Coldplay to Tori Amos to Tom Wolfe--feel compelled to give it expression? It is tempting to say that America's fears and anxieties are understandable in the light of 9/11, the ongoing War on Terror, nuclear proliferation, and the seemingly limitless capacity of science to continually challenge our conceptions of the universe and ourselves. Perhaps, too, American culture remains so permeated by Protestant Christianity that even avowed skeptics cannot pry themselves from its grip. In *A Consumer's Guide to the Apocalypse*, Eduardo Velásquez argues that these answers are too pat. Velásquez's astonishing thesis is that when we peer into contemporary artists' creative depiction of our sensibilities we discover that the antagonisms that fuel the current cultural wars stem from the same source. Enthusiastic religions and dogmatic science, the flourishing of scientific reason and the fascination with mystical darkness, cultural triumphalists and multicultural ideologues are all sustained by the same thing: a willful commitment to the basic tenets of the Enlightenment. Velásquez makes his point with insightful readings of the music of Coldplay, Tori Amos, and Dave Matthews and the fiction of Michael Frayn's *Copenhagen*, Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club*, and Tom Wolfe's *I Am Charlotte Simmons*. Written with grace and humor, and directed toward the lay reader, *A Consumer's Guide to the Apocalypse* is a tour de force of cultural analysis.

## **Culture, Identities and Technology in the Star Wars Films**

If the discovery of life elsewhere in the universe is just around the corner, what would be the consequences for religion? Would it represent another major conflict between science and religion, even leading to the death of faith? Some would suggest that the discovery of any suggestion of extraterrestrial life would have a greater impact than even the Copernican and Darwinian revolutions. It is now over 50 years since the first modern scientific papers were published on the search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI). Yet the religious implications of this search and possible discovery have never been systematically addressed in the scientific or theological arena. SETI is now entering its most important era of scientific development. New observation techniques are leading to the discovery of extra-solar planets daily, and the Kepler mission has already collected over 1000 planetary candidates. This deluge of data is transforming the scientific and popular

view of the existence of extraterrestrial intelligence. Earth-like planets outside of our solar system can now be identified and searched for signs of life. Now is a crucial time to assess the scientific and theological questions behind this search. This book sets out the scientific arguments undergirding SETI, with particular attention to the uncertainties in arguments and the strength of the data already assembled. It assesses not only the discovery of planets but other areas such as the Fermi paradox, the origin and evolution of intelligent life, and current SETI strategies. In all of this it reflects on how these questions are shaped by history and pop culture and their relationship with religion, especially Christian theology. It is argued that theologians need to take seriously SETI and to examine some central doctrines such as creation, incarnation, revelation, and salvation in the light of the possibility of extraterrestrial life.

### **Christianity and the Mass Media in America**

Grounded in Christian principles, this accessible and engaging book offers an informed and fascinating approach to popular culture. William D. Romanowski provides affectionate yet astute analysis of familiar, well-loved movies and television characters from Indiana Jones to Homer Simpson, and he speaks with historical depth and expertise on films from Casablanca to Crash and music from Bruce Springsteen to U2. Romanowski's confessional approach affirms a role for popular culture in faithful living. Practical, analytical approaches to content, meaning, and artistic style offer the tools to participate responsibly and imaginatively in popular cultural activities. An engaging read, this new edition introduces students and thoughtful readers to popular culture--one of the most influential forces in contemporary society.

### **Reforming Hollywood**

Beyond Culture Wars shows that the church, not the world, must become our primary target for reformation.

### **Why Liberals Win the Culture Wars (Even When They Lose Elections)**

Increasingly, the religious practices people engage in and the ways they talk about what is meaningful or sacred take place in the context of media culture—in the realm of the so-called secular. Focusing on this intersection of the sacred and the secular, this volume gathers together the work of media experts, religious historians, sociologists of religion, and authorities on American studies and art history. Topics range from Islam on the Internet to the quasi-religious practices of Elvis fans, from the uses of popular culture by the Salvation Army in its early years to the uses of interactive media technologies at the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Beit Hashoah Museum of Tolerance. The issues that the essays address include the public/private divide, the distinctions between the sacred and profane, and how to distinguish between the practices that may be termed "religious" and those that may not.

### **Culture Wars and Enduring American Dilemmas**

When Patrick Buchanan took the stage at the Republican National Convention in 1992 and proclaimed, "There is a religious war going on for the soul of our country," his audience knew what he was talking about: the culture wars, which had raged throughout the previous decade and would continue until the century's end, pitting conservative and religious Americans against their liberal, secular fellow citizens. It was an era marked by polarization and posturing fueled by deep-rooted anger and insecurity. Buchanan's fiery speech marked a high point in the culture wars, but as Andrew Hartman shows in this richly analytical history, their roots lay farther back, in the tumult of the 1960s—and their significance is much greater than generally assumed. Far more than a mere sideshow or shouting match, the culture wars, Hartman argues, were the very public face of America's struggle over the unprecedented social changes of the period, as the cluster of social norms that had long governed American life began to give way to a new openness to different ideas, identities, and articulations of what it meant to be an American. The hot-button issues like abortion, affirmative action, art, censorship, feminism, and homosexuality that dominated politics in the period were symptoms of the larger struggle, as conservative Americans slowly began to acknowledge—if initially through rejection—many fundamental transformations of American life. As an ever-more partisan but also an ever-more diverse and accepting America continues to find its way in a changing world, *A War for the Soul of America* reminds us of how we got here, and what all the shouting has really been about.

### **Practicing Religion in the Age of the Media**

A riveting account of how Christian fundamentalists, Orthodox Jews, and conservative Catholics have joined forces in a battle against their progressive counterparts for control of American secular culture.

### **Science, Religion, and the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence**

Religious Communication Association's Book of the Year Hollywood and Christianity often seem to be at war. Indeed, there is a long list of movies that have attracted religious condemnation, from *Gone with the Wind* with its notorious "damn," to *The Life of Brian* and *The Last Temptation of Christ*. But the reality, writes William Romanowski, has been far more complicated--and remarkable. In *Reforming Hollywood*, Romanowski, a leading historian of popular culture, explores the long and varied efforts of Protestants to influence the film industry. He shows how a broad spectrum of religious forces have played a role in Hollywood, from Presbyterians and Episcopalians to fundamentalists and evangelicals. Drawing on personal interviews and previously untouched sources, he describes how mainline church leaders lobbied filmmakers to promote the nation's moral health and, perhaps surprisingly, how they have by and large opposed government censorship, preferring instead self-regulation by both the industry and individual conscience. "It is this human choice," noted one Protestant leader, "that is the basis of our religion." Tensions with Catholics, too, have loomed large--many Protestant clergy feared the influence of the Legion of Decency more than Hollywood's corrupting power. Romanowski shows that the rise of the evangelical movement in the 1970s radically altered the picture, in contradictory ways. Even as born-again clergy

denounced "Hollywood elites," major studios noted the emergence of a lucrative evangelical market. 20th Century-Fox formed FoxFaith to go after the "Passion dollar," and Disney took on evangelical Philip Anschutz as a partner to bring *The Chronicles of Narnia* to the big screen. William Romanowski is an award-winning commentator on the intersection of religion and popular culture. *Reforming Hollywood* is his most revealing, provocative, and groundbreaking work on this vital area of American society.

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