



The Altars Where We Worship: The Religious Significance of Popular Culture

Juan M. Floyd-Thomas, Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas, Mark G. Toulouse

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While a large percentage of Americans claim religious identity, the number of Americans attending traditional worship services has significantly declined in recent decades. Where, then, are Americans finding meaning in their lives, if not in the context of traditional religion? In this provocative study, the authors argue that the objects of our attention have become our god and fulfilling our desires has become our religion. They examine the religious dimensions of six specific aspects of American culture body and sex, big business, entertainment, politics, sports, and science and technology that function as altars where Americans gather to worship and produce meaning for their lives. *The Altars Where We Worship* shows how these secular altars provide resources for understanding the self, others, and the world itself. For better or worse, the authors write, we are faced with the reality that human experiences before these altars contain religious characteristics in common with experiences before more traditional altars. Readers will come away with a clearer understanding of what religion is after exploring the thoroughly religious aspects of popular culture in the United States.

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