



Nine Theories of Religion

By Daniel Pals

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Nine Theories of Religion By Daniel Pals

Why do human beings believe in divinities? Why do some seek eternal life, while others seek escape from recurring lives? Why do the beliefs and behaviors we typically call "religious" so deeply affect the human personality and so subtly weave their way through human society?

Revised and updated in this third edition, *Nine Theories of Religion* considers how these fundamental questions have engaged the most important thinkers of the modern era. Accessible, systematic, and succinct, it considers the Victorian anthropology of E. B. Tylor and J. G. Frazer, the "reductionist" social science of Sigmund Freud, Émile Durkheim, and Karl Marx, the non-reductionist approaches of Max Weber, William James, and Mircea Eliade, and the alternative paradigms that have arisen from the work of E. E. Evans-Pritchard and Clifford Geertz. The third edition features a new chapter on William James. Each chapter offers biographical background, theoretical exposition, conceptual analysis, and critical assessment.

Ideal as a supplementary text in introductory religion courses or as the main text in theory and method in religious studies or in sociology of religion courses, *Nine Theories of Religion*, Third Edition, offers an illuminating treatment of this controversial and fascinating subject. It can be used as a stand-alone text or with the author's companion reader, *Introducing Religion: Readings from the Classic Theorists*.

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Review

"I find *Nine Theories of Religion* to be the best condensation of essential theory available. Its greatest strength is the logic of the presentation of the theories, followed by a critical appraisal rehearsing each theory's strengths and weaknesses."--Thomas W. Martin, *Susquehanna University*

About the Author

Daniel L. Pals is Professor of Religious Studies and History at the University of Miami. He is the author of *Introducing Religion: Readings from the Classic Theorists* (OUP, 2008).

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