



# The 16 Strivings for God: The New Psychology of Religious Experiences

By Steven Reiss

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## The 16 Strivings for God: The New Psychology of Religious Experiences By Steven Reiss

The first comprehensive, psychological theory in over a century--Reiss picks up where William James left off This ground breaking work will change the way we understand religion. Period. Previous scholars such as Freud, James, Durkheim, and Maslow did not successfully identify the essence of religion as fear of death, mysticism, sacredness, communal bonding, magic, or peak experiences because religion has no single essence. Religion is about the values motivated by the sixteen basic desires of human nature. It has mass appeal because it accommodates the values of people with opposite personality traits. This is the first comprehensive theory of the psychology of religion that can be scientifically verified. Reiss proposes a peer-reviewed, original theory of mysticism, asceticism, spiritual personality, and hundreds of religious beliefs and practices. Written for serious readers and anyone interested in psychology and religion (especially their own), this eminently readable book will revolutionize the psychology of religious experience by exploring the motivations and characteristics of the individual in their religious life.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

Steven Reiss has developed a comprehensive theory of religion that illuminates why it is that religion is such a pervasive cultural force. Rather than impose unwarranted assumptions that either applaud or condemn religion, Reiss allows his empirically grounded theory to reveal how values that define religion are rooted in the sixteen basic desires all humans have.

--RALPH W. HOOD JR., PhD, Former editor, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*

Steven Reiss' response to those who see religion as stemming from the fear of death is very powerful--and a major contribution of the book in itself. --

ANDREW McKINNON, University of Aberdeen

Steven Reiss is a profound thinker and a deeply compassionate person. Those qualities come together in this book as he probes one of the most difficult questions of all time--what are our basic human needs and how do religion and spirituality fulfill those needs? His answers will captivate and enlighten you.--CAROL DWECK, Lewis & Virginia Eaton Professor of Psychology, Stanford University

Professor Reiss has written an extremely interesting, creative, and original book presenting a new theory about religion and the religious life. --ELLEN LANGER, Professor of Psychology at Harvard University

#### About the Author

Steven Reiss is an American psychologist who continues to contribute original ideas, new assessment methods, and influential research studies to three topics in psychology: anxiety disorders, developmental disabilities, and intrinsic motivation. Reiss was educated at Dartmouth College, Yale University, and Harvard University. He served as a tenured professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago (1972-1991) and at The Ohio State University (1991-2008), where for sixteen years he directed the developmental disabilities center at The Ohio State University Medical Center. He is the author of several books, including the bestselling *Who Am I? The 16 Basic Desires that Motivate Our Actions and Define Our Personalities* .

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