



The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality

By Paul Heelas, Linda Woodhead

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Comparing existing evidence from the USA and Europe, with a UK-based study of religion and spirituality, this fascinating book addresses the most pressing question in the study of religion today: are new forms of spirituality overtaking traditional forms of religion?

- Based on the detailed study of religion and spirituality in Kendal, UK
- Compares pioneering findings from Kendal with existing evidence from the USA and Europe
- Provides a theoretical perspective which explains both secularization and sacralization
- Offers some startling predictions about the future of religion and spirituality in the west
- Is written in an accessible and lively style, and will appeal to a broad range of readers interested in the future direction of belief in the western world.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This is an important book that should be read by anyone concerned with the future of religion in this country. I say this for two reasons: first, because it tells us new things about the nature of religious activity in Britain; and second, because the authors offer an interesting interpretation of their data, drawing from innovative theoretical insights." *Church Times*

"It is clear that this book, with the distinctions it introduces and its daring central thesis, is a major contribution to the current debate. The careful way in which the authors develop their argument step by step, taking into account possible objections, is admirable." *Journal of Contemporary Religion*

"Is Britain undergoing a seismic cultural shift with New Age forms of spirituality set to overtake traditional Christian expressions? That's the fundamental question explored in depth by two leading researchers into religious life in Britain today. Their landmark book ... sets out their findings with back-up evidence from studies worldwide. It raises key issues for all concerned for the future of Christianity in Britain." *The Baptist Times*

"Clearly, this book written by leading sociologists of religion, is a must for anyone interested in sociology, alternative spirituality and Christian studies, and will be made reference to in many forthcoming researches. I strongly recommend anyone with an interest in this field of study to read the book as it highlights current research findings as well as breaks new ground in sociology of religion." *Australian Religious Studies Review*

"This book explores the significance for contemporary religion and spirituality of the subjective turn in modern culture. To understand this, we need both careful empirical research and constant reflection on our categories. Heelas and Woodhead supply both in generous measure." *Charles Taylor, McGill University*

"This well-researched and cogently argued study offers a challenging diagnosis of the spiritual condition of present-day Britain. It will be hotly debated by sociologists, theologians, and all those interested in the future of religion and spirituality." *Hugh McLeod, University of Birmingham*

"*The Spiritual Revolution* provides a much-needed survey and theoretical synthesis of research on religious involvement, particularly in Great Britain and the United States ... The result is a much more nuanced and productive account of religious change than the usual secularization versus sacralization approach." *Penny Marler, Samford University*

"A book such as this, whose contributors understand the shades of grey and are able to provide a critique of the religious fanaticism and extremism (on all sides) that has given the rise to so much of the controversy surrounding *The Passion*, should be essential reading in schools and universities everywhere." *Chris Deacy, University of Kent*

From the Back Cover

Are we living through a 'spiritual revolution' in which traditional forms of religion are giving way to new forms of spirituality? Are yoga, reiki and other forms of holistic practice set to become more popular than churchgoing?

This book addresses these questions by presenting findings from a major research project designed to chart the state of religion and spirituality today. Though it finds little to support more extreme claims of change, it discovers that spiritualities which engage with the depths of personal experience are faring far better than religions that demand conformity to higher truth. These developments are explained by drawing attention to the significance of a 'subjective turn' in the wider culture – whereby conformity to external obligations becomes less important than sensitivity to inner life and wellbeing.

About the Author

Paul Heelas is Professor in Religion and Modernity and **Linda Woodhead** is Senior Lecturer in Christian Studies, both in the Department of Religious Studies at Lancaster University, UK. They have written extensively on religion and spirituality in the modern world.

Users Review

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David Chambers:

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