



God Forbid: Religion and Sex in American Public Life (Religion in America)

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Since the 1980s, religion has been most visible in American public life when issues of sexuality and reproduction are at stake. Paradoxically, however, the voices that speak most loudly in the name of religion are often unschooled in religious history, world religions, theology, or ethics. As a result, religion in America is misrepresented as anxiously and obsessively concerned with sex, and as uniformly supporting the conservative agenda of "family values."

This volume corrects that distortion in American public discourse. Its thirteen previously unpublished articles introduce scholarly perspectives on issues including the family, gay rights, abortion, welfare policy, prostitution, and assisted reproduction. They richly display the complexities and conflicts that exist not only between but within America's various religious traditions--for example, the pro-choice strain within Christian history, the support of many religious denominations for gay rights, and the criticism of patriarchal family structures within religious communities past and present. In these essays, contributors put forth views of sexual ethics that are just and compassionate, respectful of cultural pluralism, and attentive to democratic processes.

Thoroughly researched, lucidly written, and carefully argued, this anthology will debunk the claims of the Religious Right to be the only "religious" word on sexuality in America.

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