

It is a pleasure to see how David Martin in his new book punctures the certainties about religion and secularization that continue to flow from the mouths of many in the media and even the academy by showing the ironies and paradoxes that everywhere lie beneath such generalizations. Martin remains close to the ground in examining the enormous variety of developments not only within nation-states but within continents in the changing configurations of the sacred and the secular with respect to organized religion, democracy, violence and modernity itself. He gives us a sobering education about the realities beneath the slogans, whatever we might think about the realities he discloses.

Robert N. Bellah, University of California, Berkeley, USA

This is required reading. Martin breaks new ground with respect to the place of religion in the modern world. He is critical, however, of unqualified assertions that God is 'back'. Instead he returns repeatedly to the careful analyses of the secularization process that he established some forty years ago.

Such an approach remains as apposite as ever.

Grace Davie, University of Exeter, UK

David Martin is the great pioneer of a political sociology of religion. His historical erudition and global perspective, his healthy scepticism regarding premature generalizations and his sharp tongue make this collection of his recent essays a goldmine of insight and a pleasurable reading.

Hans Joas, Director of the Max Weber Centre,
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