

Adam Possamai, *Sociology of Religion for Generations X and Y*. Equinox Publishing Ltd, London and Oakville, 2009, pp. x + 225, ISBN: 9781845533045 (hbk), 9781845533038 (pbk). Review doi: 10.1558/arsr.v23i3.373.

This short book is a largely successful attempt to bring the academic discipline of sociology of religion to a new audience. The range of popular cultural referents used by Possamai will appeal to both Generation X (which he defines as those born after the Baby Boomers, between 1965 to 1980) and Generation Y (sometimes called Echo Boomers, as many are the children of Baby Boomers), being those born from 1981 to 2000. There are disputes about these dates (many have preferred sixteen years as the length of these 'generations', placing the Boomers from 1946 to 1962, the Xers from 1963 to 1979, and the Ys from 1980 to 1996, with the Net Generation, or Generation Z starting in 1997) but the broad characteristics of Generations X and Y apply across the range of dates. These generations are more likely to be 'unchurched', in that they were not brought up within a religious tradition and do not participate in institutional religion. Yet they are interested in spirituality, and are likely to develop a personal religio-spiritual orientation that derives from popular culture, their friends, and an eclectic range of beliefs and practices from a number of religions, both Eastern and Western.

The subject matter of traditional sociology of religion textbooks is both boring and alienating to these generations. Thus, Possamai teaches sociology through discussions of the television sitcom 'Friends', the Harry Potter and *Lord of the Rings* series of novels, films such as *The Matrix* and *Star Wars*, blogs and other internet phenomena. Further, the religions his readers learn about include traditional Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, but also the Church of Scientology, Paganism, the New Age, and the film-based religions of Matrixism and Jediism. The book also contains solid, though brief, treatments of classic topics (methodological approaches to modernity, the secularisation thesis, McDonaldisation, consumer culture and religion, and Colin Campbell's 'Easternisation of the West' thesis). I predict that students will be charmed by this approach and their learning will be enhanced by the familiarity of the material through which Possamai explains the sociology of religion. The only criticism is that all the topics are covered very briefly and that in some cases the pop culture examples are allowed, somewhat, to outweigh the sociology. I recommend it to teachers of high school and undergraduate students.

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