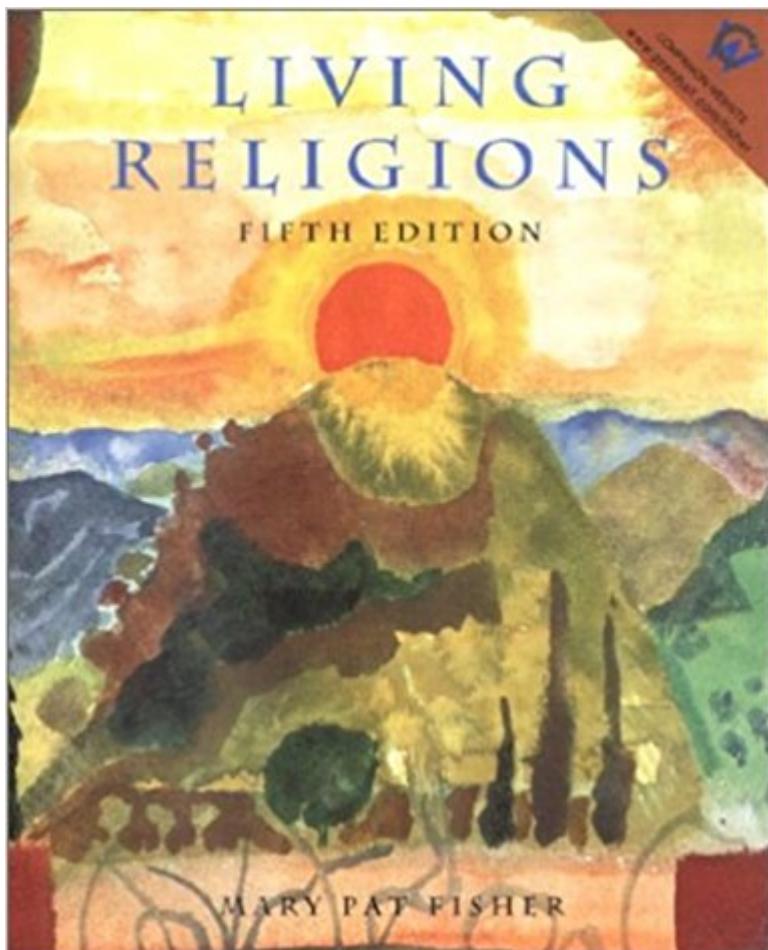


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# Living Religions (5th Edition)



## **Synopsis**

For one/two-semester courses in World Religions; and Comparative Religions and Introduction to Religion courses. This clearly written survey of the modern religious world explores the development, doctrines, and practices of today's major faiths--both traditional and modern religious movements. Sensitive and thought-provoking, it explores contemporary socio-political issues such as religion and materialism, the role of women, and fundamentalism. The extensive illustrations bring each religion to life, emphasizing the personal consciousness of believers.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"Religion is not a museum piece. As the twenty-first century begins, religion is a vibrant force in the lives of many people around the world, and many religions are presently experiencing a renaissance." <sup>151</sup> Mary Pat Fisher, Preface to *Living Religions* *Living Religions*, in its revised and updated fifth edition, presents a highly readable and stimulating survey of the modern religious world. Exploring the historical development and teachings of traditional faiths, indigenous religions, and new religious movements, this book considers how each of these traditions has evolved into contemporary beliefs and practices. This edition also explores in more detail the changing nature of each religion, the spread of religious pluralism and the movement toward interfaith dialogue. With the help of a team of specialist consultants in each faith, and drawing on a wealth of scholarly research and firsthand source material, Mary Pat Fisher has revised *Living Religions* to give a fresh and challenging insight into how believers of today's faiths perceive their religion and its role in the

changing world in which they live. **NEW TO THIS EDITION** New and revised color feature boxes on religious figures in public life, religion in practice, and interviews with practitioners of living religions. Six color timelines and eleven color maps providing the historical and geographical context for each religion. Enhanced coverage of the socio-political context of the contemporary practice of religion. Increased coverage of the contributions and concerns of women in each tradition. Extended coverage of both African and African-American religious experience. Additional suggestions for extra reading to accompany each chapter. Revised and extended Glossary. Over 120 new color and black and white illustrations.

Religion is not a museum piece. As the twenty-first century begins, religion is a vibrant force in the lives of many people around the world, and many religions are presently experiencing a renaissance. *Living Religions* is a sympathetic approach to what is living and significant in the world's major religious traditions and in various new movements that are arising. This book provides a clear and straightforward account of the development, doctrines, and practices of the major faiths followed today. The emphasis throughout is on the personal consciousness of believers and their own accounts of their religion and its relevance in contemporary life. **Special features** This fifth edition of *Living Religions* preserves and improves upon the features that make *Living Religions* special. One of these is the personal interviews with followers of each faith. This material provides interesting and informative first-person accounts of each religion as perceived from within the tradition. I have presented these first-person quotations from many people, from a Siberian shamaness to a holocaust survivor, in "Interview" feature boxes and also in excerpts woven throughout the text. A new interview box has been added in the Jain chapter, giving insights into the ascetic life of a "semi-nun." The feature boxes on "Religion in Public Life" have been much appreciated, so I have added two new ones to this edition. One is with U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman, in which he gives intimate views of the spiritual life of traditional Judaism that underlies his public service. The final chapter, which looks at current issues in religion as we begin living in the new millennium, includes a feature box on former U.S. President and peace worker Jimmy Carter, illustrating his deeply religious values. There are now a total of eight of these boxes in the text, portraying the spiritual roots of people who are making significant contributions to modern society. There are also eight feature boxes on "Religion in Practice," such as the, Sun Dance, in which dancers in indigenous American societies practice self-sacrifice for the sake of their peoples, and Mother Teresa's example of Christian love in action. In addition, there are ten feature boxes containing "Teaching Stories" that can serve as take-off points for discussions about core values

imbedded in each faith. Violence perpetrated in the name of religion is often in the news these days. This fifth edition includes probing discussions of this disturbing factor in many major religions and also in new religious movements. Distinctions are made between the basic teachings of religions, none of which condones wanton violence, and the ways in which religions have been politicized. Coverage of the socio-political context of the contemporary practice of religions has been increased especially in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001 in the United States, which brought a sea change in the ways that people of different religions look at each other. People of many faiths are also looking at ways in which their religious practices and beliefs affect the environment. This edition, therefore, includes new material on religious approaches to contemporary ecological concerns, from the high dams that are threatening traditional cultures in India to the story of an American woman who lived high in an ancient redwood tree for two years to save it.

Throughout the book, coverage of women's contributions and women's issues has been increased. Women's voices are woven into the discussions throughout, including female theologians who are bringing vital new perspectives to religious scholarship. African and African-American religious experiences are also of increasing interest, and these are more extensively covered in this edition. There are poignant descriptions, for instance, of the lives of American Muslim converts who are trying to maintain traditional piety in the midst of modern materialistic society. New religious movements are still proliferating in all directions. Some have turned to violent means of expressing their beliefs, so I have incorporated specific discussion of violence in new religious movements in Chapter 12. That chapter has been extensively revised, reorganized, and updated. The opening chapter, "The Religious Response," has likewise been overhauled to bring more critical scholarship to bear on underlying issues in the study of religion and, in all chapters, the latest scholarship has been applied. Valuable primary source material has also been updated and expanded in this fifth edition. The book incorporates extensive quotations from primary sources to give a direct perception of the thinking and flavor of each tradition. Particularly memorable brief quotations are set off in boxes. One of the most engaging features of *Living Religions* is its illustrations. I have been glad to have the chance to add more than 120 new pictures—many of them in color—to this fifth edition to help bring religions to life. Narrative captions accompanying the illustrations offer additional insights into the characteristics and orientation of each tradition and the people who practice it. Learning aids I have tried to present each tradition clearly and without the clutter of less important names and dates. Key terms, defined and highlighted in boldface when they first appear, are included in an extensive glossary which has been further expanded and revised in this edition. Because students are often unfamiliar with terms from other cultures, useful guides to pronunciation

of words that may be unfamiliar are included in the glossary. Maps are used throughout the text to give a sense of geographical reality to the historical discussions, as well as to illustrate the present distribution of the religions. I have added a new map of the missionary journeys of the apostle Paul in the chapter on Christianity. Timelines are used to recapitulate the historical development of the major religions. These have been brought up to the present and redesigned for clarity. The simultaneous development of all religions can be compared in the overall timeline on the end pages.

I assume that readers will want to delve further into the literature. At the end of each chapter, I offer an annotated list of books that might be particularly interesting and useful in deeper study of that religion.

Coming from a nation with multi ethnicity multi religiosity, I realize after reading this book for a world religions class that it has not been objective in the way it portrays each religion and there are parts that are misleading. Very disappointed especially when you are truly seeking to understand the different religions, both the good and the bad. The book also seems biased towards Islam as the entire read on the chapter on Islam seems to portray Christianity in a bad light and Islam as peaceful and we know enough of history to know that both religions have violent historical backgrounds.

Unfortunately I only found out towards the end of my semester, but this particular print was obviously botched. It's missing the last few pages of the Christianity chapter and the first few pages of the Islam chapter. There are also another 10 pages of the Islam chapter that are repeated but perhaps this is to make up for a batch of missing pages in the middle of the chapter. Pretty frustrating.

This is a textbook, and my assumption was that all 9th edition texts would be the same, but evidently different colleges can make modifications, and even though my school is using this edition, the chapters are in a different order, and each chapter is a little different in the way the parts are put together.

I had to get this textbook for a class I was taking and I really enjoyed reading it. It wasn't very detailed on the Christianity chapter but the other chapters (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and others) were very easy to follow and you wanted to keep reading and find out about the other religious beliefs and cultures. I am very happy that my instructor chose this book to help us learn

about different religions.

Good Deal. Well written and Illustrated. More interesting than most textbooks with some incite into daily lives of people with different social and religious backgrounds. I would recommend this book to someone that is not taking college courses and just wants a well-rounded understanding of the world's major religions.

I've been using this book (or a version of it) for years. Mary Fisher does a great job of getting as much information in as possible while keeping it accessible for undergrads. It is a great resource and a great text for World Religions classes.

This is a great book written by open-minded, compassionate people who love God and humanity and treasure the common heritage of mankind -- religion. They observe religions from a positive, objective point of view, whereby bring out the currency, strengths and issues of the religions for the readers to understand and ponder. It is written in the language that is lucid and cogent. Read it to expand your horizon of faith, knowledge, understanding and compassion!

It is what was needed and reasonable price for a college text book. I will be buying online more often. There was no damage to this book, the cd was included (even tho I did not need it). I am very happy with the book.

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