

Religion in—and as—Contemporary Culture

(Christiano et al., chapter 10)

“Religious culture may be culture of merely one type, but it is a type that for believers is primary, for it comes close to defining identity and purpose for them in this existence. The symbols of religion—and the ritual actions that, when repeated, catalyze their meaning—give places to people in this world, orienting them to self and others. In addition they forecast for people what they can expect in this life and the next. Culture of this type thus tells those who craft and consume it who they are and where they fit, both in society and across the broader sweep of history.” (p. 273).

There is a large market for religious (particularly evangelical Christian culture). E.g., books (Bibles, fiction and nonfiction), stuffed animals, picture frames, greeting cards, jewelry, and so on.

There is a large market for religious broadcasting.

Mainline denominations dominated religious broadcasting before a 1960 FCC ruling that stations could use commercial broadcasts for “public interest” quotas.

The focus on raising donations is largely a result of organizational and economic constraints.

Consumers of religious broadcasting use it to supplement (not replace) church attendance.

The world wide web is another major source of religious culture, much of it evangelical Christian.