

An Outline Review
of
Huston Smith's
The World's Religions
(Our Great Wisdom Traditions)
Introductions

Foreword

"Not of my doing! It all came from Above."

Preface to the Second Edition

The Book's aim: "to carry intelligent laypeople into the heart of the world's great enduring faiths to the point where they might see, and even feel, why and how they guide and motivate the lives of those who live by them."

Acknowledgments

the chief support ... "a wife's help"

Chapter I. Point of Departure

There are God-seekers in every land. Does one faith carry the lead? We cannot know. All we can do is try to listen. Such listening, listening for well defined themes defines the purpose of this book.

A. What this book is not:

1. This book is not a textbook in the history of religions.
2. Even in the realm of meanings the book does not attempt to give a rounded view of the religions considered.
3. This book is not a balanced account of its subject but of religion at its best. The empowering theological and metaphysical truths of the world's religions are, this book is prepared to argue, inspired. Religious institutions are another story. When religions are sifted for those truths, a different, cleaner side appears. They become the world's wisdom traditions.
4. This book is not a book on comparative religions in the sense of seeking to compare their worth.

B. What this book is:

1. It is a book that seeks to embrace the world. We have come to the point in history where we must all struggle to be a citizen of the world. The only thing that is unqualifiedly good is extended vision, the enlargement of one's understanding of the ultimate nature of things.
 2. It is a book that takes religion seriously. Religion is at work on the things that matter most. Authentic religion has power to inspire life's deepest creative centers.
 3. This book makes a real effort to communicate. The author has tried not to lose sight of the relevance this material has for the problems that human beings face today.
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