



Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults

Christian Smith, Patricia Snell

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How important is religion for young people in America today? What are the major influences on their developing spiritual lives? How do their religious beliefs and practices change as young people enter into adulthood?

Christian Smith's *Souls in Transition* explores these questions and many others as it tells the definitive story of the religious and spiritual lives of emerging adults, ages 18 to 24, in the U.S. today. This is the much-anticipated follow-up study to the landmark book, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. Based on candid interviews with thousands of young people tracked over a five-year period, *Souls in Transition* reveals how the religious practices of the teenagers portrayed in *Soul Searching* have been strengthened, challenged, and often changed as they have moved into adulthood. The book vividly describes as well the broader cultural world of today's emerging adults, how that culture shapes their religious outlooks, and what the consequences are for religious faith and practice in America more generally. Some of Smith's findings are surprising. Parents turn out to be the single most important influence on the religious outcomes in the lives of young adults. On the other hand, teenage participation in evangelization missions and youth groups does not predict a high level of religiosity just a few years later. Moreover, the common wisdom that religiosity declines sharply during the young adult years is shown to be greatly exaggerated.

Painstakingly researched and filled with remarkable findings, *Souls in Transition* will be essential reading for youth ministers, pastors, parents, teachers and students at church-related schools, and anyone who wishes to know how religious practice is affected by the transition into adulthood in America today.

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