



Men and Their Religion: Honor, Hope, and Humor

Donald Capps

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Are men more or less religious than women, and in what way? In *Men and Their Religion*, Donald Capps brings to life men's engagement with religion and provides insights into the rapid rise of men's religious organizations such as Promise Keepers.

Capps says that men are just as religious as women, but in a different way. The religiousness of men is rooted in a deep sense of melancholy, a sense originating when they are small boys separating emotionally from their mothers. Fathers also play a part in the religious development of men. The Judaeo-Christian tradition, Capps argues, requires the sacrifice of father-son love because the Father God is a jealous God, allowing no rivals. So for boys, the hoped-for attachment to their fathers never happens.

As a result of this loss, the religion of men takes three forms: the religion of honor, the religion of hope, and the religion of humor. Capps uses two case studies to show the ways in which men with religious melancholia may develop a compensating religion of honor on one hand and a religion of hope on the other. Finally, religious melancholy can be countered through humor, and Capps concludes that if men had their way there would be more humor in religion and humor would be recognized as religious.

Donald Capps is Professor of Pastoral Theology, Princeton Theological Seminary. His books include *Jesus: A Psychological Biography*, *Freud and Freudians on Religion, Men, Religion, and Melancholia*, and *Social Phobia: Alleviating Anxiety in an Age of Self-promotion*. He lives in Princeton, New Jersey.

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