The Religious Challenge To The State

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Since the late 1970s, transnational religious institutions have begun to reassert their own beliefs, contending that God's law is above state law and challenging states' claims of sovereignty. In turn, states have enforced their authority by establishing government-controlled state religions, by separating religion from politics, or by denying religion's influence over public and private affairs. This collection of original essays systematically examines the way in which three of the world's major monotheistic religions Islam, Christianity, and Judaism interact with twentieth-century religious nationalism. Confronting the Secular State, Mark Juergensmeyer here provides an up-to-date road map through this complex new religious terrain. Basing his discussion on interviews with militant activists and case studies of rebellious movements, Juergensmeyer puts a human face on conflicts that have become increasingly abstract. He revises our notions of religious revolution and offers positive proposals for responding to religious activism in ways that will diminish the violence and lead to an accommodation between radical religion and the secular world. CHAPTER 1 The Religious Challenge to the Secular State. (pp. 9-38). One of the more puzzling features of the fatwa in which Osama bin Laden proclaimed war on the American and European West in 1996 was his comparison of Western presence in the Middle East with the Crusades and colonialism. Religious challenges to secular politics in the last decades of the twentieth century had, by the beginning of the twenty-first, all the appearances of a global rebellion. The confrontation developed in stages, and at each stage the escalation of hostility was due both to the belligerence of new religious activists and to the obstinacy of their secular opponents.