



# Religion and Community in the New Urban America

*Paul D. Numrich, Elfriede Wedam*

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*Religion and Community in the New Urban America* examines the interrelated transformations of cities and urban congregations. The authors ask how the new metropolis affects local religious communities and what role those communities play in creating the new metropolis. Through an in-depth study of fifteen Chicago congregations—Catholic parishes, Protestant churches, Jewish synagogues, Muslim mosques, and a Hindu temple, both city and suburban—this book describes congregational life and measures congregational influences on urban environments. Paul D. Numrich and Elfriede Wedam challenge the view held by many urban studies scholars that religion plays a small role—if any—in shaping postindustrial cities and that religious communities merely adapt to urban structures in a passive fashion. Taking into account the spatial distribution of constituents, internal traits, and external actions, each congregation's urban impact is plotted on a continuum of weak, to moderate, to strong, thus providing a nuanced understanding of the significance of religion in the contemporary urban context. Presenting a thoughtful analysis that includes maps of each congregation in its social-geographic setting, the authors offer an insightful look into urban community life today, from congregations to the places in which they are embedded.

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