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Gérard Delille

The Economy of God

Family and Market in Christianity, Judaism and Islam

This book explains why and how the three monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – developed and then imposed distinct family and kinship systems during the period of their doctrinal elaboration, as well as their respective religious and political affirmation in the first millennium AD. Consciously opposed to each other, these deep structures created impassable cultural and social barriers between them, some of which persist to this day. Moreover, they have had considerable economic and political consequences: the gradual establishment of a “free market” and, partially, “state-run” economies in the West; the persistence of the state’s dominant role in the Muslim world; and a “diaspora economy” in the Jewish world.

The Economy of God analyzes the main features of these divergent developments, by applying the theses of K. Marx, M. Weber and K. Polanyi to the topic at hand in novel ways. In doing so, the author sheds new light on a subject that is a burning issue also in our days.

Gérard Delille has been research Director of Modern and Contemporary History at the École française de Rome, at the CNRS, and EHESS in Paris, as well as Professor of Modern History at the European University Institute in Florence. His research focuses on the history of family and kinship systems, emphasising their cultural, economic and political aspects.

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