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Bad Faith: The Danger of Religious Extremism

Neil J. Kressel

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What separates constructive religious impulses from destructive ones? How does someone who begins by contemplating his relationship with God end by committing an act of murder? Some argue that religiously motivated evil always represents a corruption of true religion. Others are quick to suggest that religion itself all religion is the root of extremist violence.

This is the first book to journey to the heart of religious militancy. Dr. Neil J. Kressel, who has spent decades researching genocide, terrorism, and anti-Semitism, brings to bear the insights of psychology and social science on this significant and critical problem. For those tired of simplistic bromides and obfuscating talk about the causes of religious terrorism, Kressel offers a clear and enlightening analysis of when and how religions become capable of inspiring evil. Specifically, he addresses the following key issues:

Ã‚Â· Are some religions, religious doctrines, and religious practices more apt to inspire hatred and extremism than others?

Ã‚Â· Are people who commit evil acts in the name of their faith always corrupting the true message of religion and, if so, what is that message?

Ã‚Â· Do other members of the same faith bear any responsibility for misdeeds carried out in the name of their religion?

Ã‚Â· Which sorts of people are most prone to extremism?

Ã‚Â· Which types of societies are most likely to become breeding grounds for extremists?

Ã‚Â· Can (or should) anything be done to combat the various forms of religious extremism? What limits, if any, can (or should) be placed on religious practice in America and elsewhere?

Beyond analyzing the nature of religious militancy, Kressel offers sensible recommendations for addressing what is to date the 21st century s most serious challenge.

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