Contents

Preface xi

Acknowledgments xix

Chapter 1: The Full Task of Philosophy of Religion 1

i. What is “Traditional Philosophy of Religion”? 3
ii. The First Task of Philosophy of Religion 10
iii. The Second Task of Philosophy of Religion 14
iv. The Third Task of Philosophy of Religion 19
v. What is the Big Idea? 24
   Bibliographic Essay 25
   Endnotes 27

Chapter 2: Are Religious Practices Philosophical? 29

i. Toward a Philosophy of Religious Practice 31
ii. Embodiment as a Paradigm for Philosophy of Religion 33
iii. Conceptual Metaphors and Embodied Religious Reason 36
iv. Religious Material Culture as Cognitive Prosthetics 40
v. A Toolkit for the Philosophical Study of Religious Practices 47
   Bibliographic Essay 49
   Endnotes 51
Contents

Chapter 3: Must Religious People Have Religious Beliefs?  53
  i. The Place of Belief in the Study of Religions  55
  ii. Objections to the Concept of Religious Belief  57
  iii. Holding One’s Beliefs in Public  61
  iv. What We Presuppose When We Attribute Beliefs  66
  v. The Universality of Belief
    Bibliographic Essay  76
    Endnotes  80

Chapter 4: Do Religions Exist?  83
  i. The Critique of “Religion”  85
  ii. The Ontology of “Religion”  89
  iii. Can There be Religion Without “Religion”?  92
  iv. “Religion” as Distortion  96
  v. The Ideology of “Religion”  101
    Bibliographic Essay  105
    Endnotes  110

Chapter 5: What Isn’t Religion?  113
  i. Strategies for Defining Religion  115
  ii. Making Promises: The Functional or Pragmatic Aspect of Religion  121
  iii. Keeping Promises: The Substantive or Ontological Aspect of Religion  127
  iv. The Growing Variety of Religious Realities  129
  v. What this Definition Excludes
    Bibliographic Essay  141
    Endnotes  147

Chapter 6: Are Religions Out of Touch With Reality?  149
  i. Religious Metaphysics in a Postmetaphysical Age  151
  ii. Antimetaphysics Today  154
  iii. Constructive Postmodernism and Unmediated Experience  158

viii
Contents

iv. Unmediated Experience and Metaphysics 163
v. The Rehabilitation of Religious Metaphysics 167
   Bibliographic Essay 171
   Endnotes 172

Chapter 7: The Academic Study of Religions: a Map With Bridges 175

i. Religious Studies as a Tripartite Field 177
ii. Describing and Explaining Religious Phenomena 180
iii. Evaluating Religious Phenomena 185
iv. Do Evaluative Approaches Belong in the Academy? 189
v. Interdisciplinary Bridges 197
   Bibliographic Essay 203
   Endnotes 205

Works Cited 207

Index 223