



# **The Humble Sublime: Secularity and the Politics of Belief (Library of Modern Religion)**

*Ronald F Thiemann*

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Can belief be taken for granted when the modern self is now so thoroughly cut off from the transcendent? The philosopher Charles Taylor has argued, in his influential work *A Secular Age*, that it cannot. But theologian Ronald F. Thiemann, likewise a prominent public intellectual, asserts – against Taylor – that people can yet find divine significance in the ordinary and everyday as much as in structured faith and worship. Thiemann's subtle idea of 'the humble sublime' hinges on a notion of sacred immanence: of holiness present in the hidden. Finding continuity between theological and overtly 'secular' writers, he shows that the late medieval and early modern eras gave rise to the persistent idea that God may be found not just where he might be expected to be, but also in his opposite. Discussing Luther, Bonhoeffer, Camus, Orwell and other important thinkers, the author argues in favor, even in a secular context, of the idea of sacred worth as a vital component of modern identity. This powerful melding of secular and sacred has a strong ethical and political dimension, especially in resisting tyranny. Thiemann's final book will appeal to all those committed to sacred value, whether agnostics, atheists or believers.

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