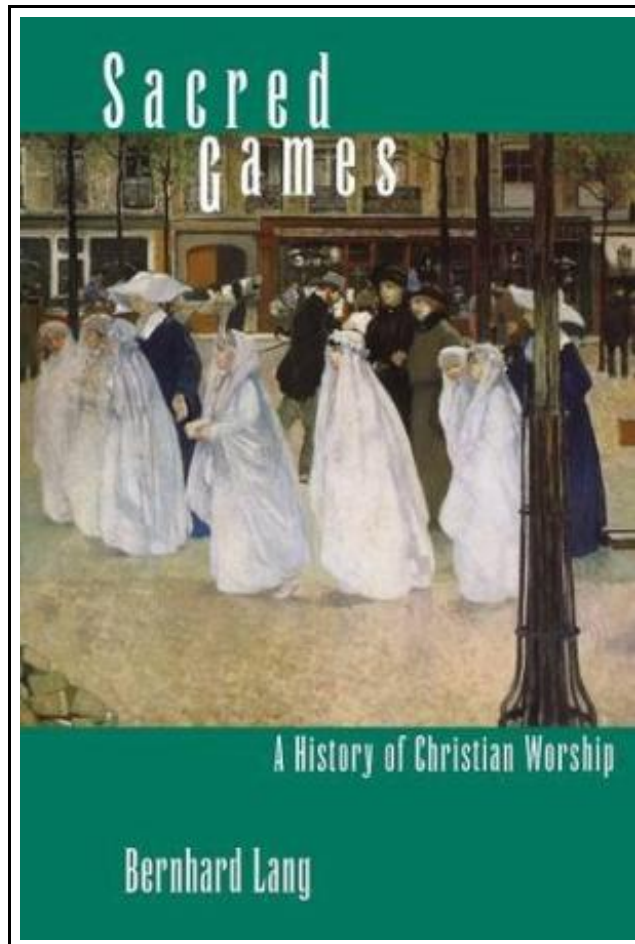


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Yale University Press, United States, 1997. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 232 x 156 mm. Language: English Brand New Book \*\*\*\*\* Print on Demand \*\*\*\*\*.When contemporary Christians worship (be they Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox or Pentecostal), they engage in a variety of ritual acts whose diversity and complexity may at first puzzle the observer. A closer look reveals that worship incorporates a limited number of major components which, repeated, form the backbone of the ceremonies Christians enact when they meet on Sundays. The refined typology of ritual acts described here focuses on six elementary forms: praise, prayer, sermon, sacrifice, sacrament and spiritual ecstasy. Sacred Games argues that the essential meaning of Christian ritual is embodied in these six elements, all of which have their roots in ancient, pre-Christian ritual life. Each has its own constituents, dynamics, meaning and distinct story. Accordingly, this book is divided into six interpretative sections which, using French, German and English sources and contrasting past experience with the present, European with American, and Catholic with Protestant, explain the meanings of each. Lang uncovers their ancient biblical roots and follows their course through history with special emphasis on biblical, historic and contemporary forms. This is a pioneering book and a major scholarly achievement: the first full-scale history and interpretation of a collective spiritual act fraught with meaning. Well-illustrated, written in a highly readable style and geared to the informed general reader as well as to students and scholars, it should become an indispensable addition to the broader study of Christianity. Bernhard Lang is Professor of Religion at the University of Paderborn, Germany and has taught in Tübingen, Mainz, Philadelphia (Temple University) and Paris (the Sorbonne). He has written many books, including (with Colleen McDannell) *Heaven: A History*, published by Yale University Press and translated into seven languages.

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