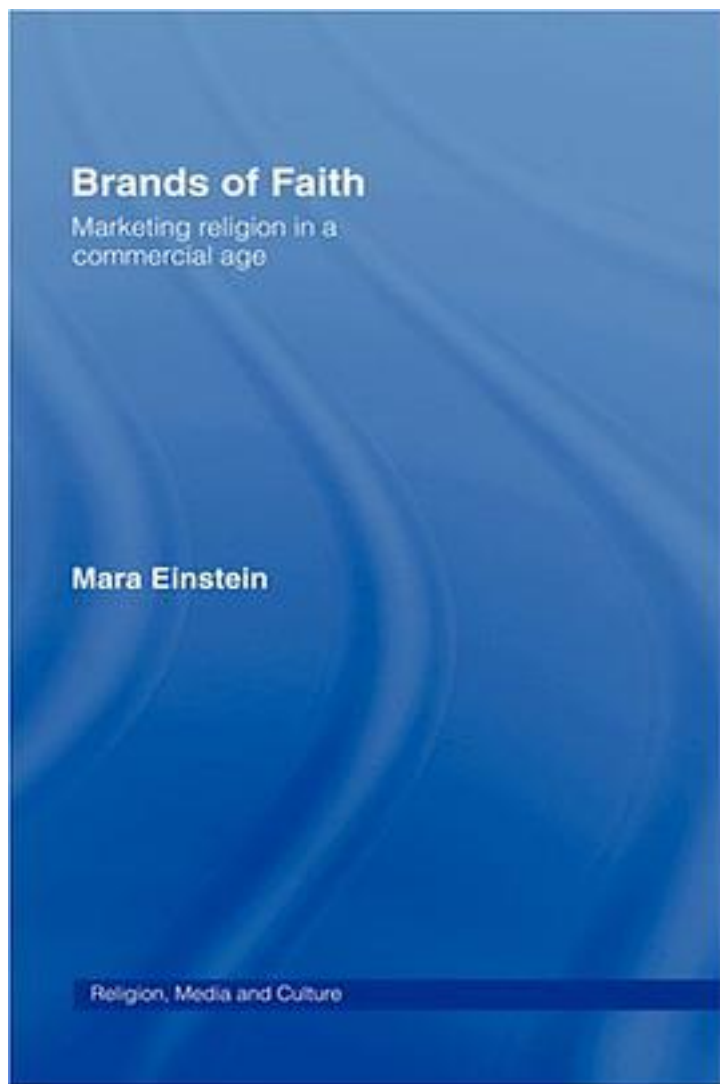


Brands of Faith



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In a society overrun by commercial clutter, religion has become yet another product sold in the consumer marketplace, and faiths of all kinds must compete with a myriad of more entertaining and more convenient leisure activities. "Brands of Faith" argues that in order to compete effectively, faiths have had to become brands - easily recognizable symbols and spokespeople with whom religious prospects can make immediate connections. Mara Einstein shows how religious branding has expanded over the past twenty years to create a blended world of commerce and faith, where the sacred becomes secular and the secular sacred. In a series of fascinating case studies of faith brands, she explores the significance of branded church courses, such as "Alpha" and "The Purpose Driven Life", mega-churches, and the popularity of the televangelist Joel Olsteen and television presenter Oprah Winfrey, as well as the rise of Kaballah. She asks what the consequences of this religious marketing will be, and outlines the possible results of religious commercialism - good and bad. Repackaging religion - updating music, creating teen-targeted bibles - is justifiable and necessary. However, when the content becomes obscured, religion may lose its unique selling proposition - the very ability to raise us above the market.

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