



Believing In Place: A Spiritual Geography Of The Great Basin

Richard V. Francaviglia

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Believing in Place is the personal testimony of a scientist who discovers the divine in the land he has studied for decades. Geographer Richard V. Francaviglia recounts his own awakening to the spirituality of “place” as he suddenly sees the sacred dimension of science. The Great Basin is the focus of Francaviglia’s meditations. It is a huge, physically diverse, and often misunderstood region that lies between the Sierra Nevada and Wasatch Mountains. It is also an area that fills the author with awe. “I feel more closely connected to the universe here than in other places. That epiphany has made my many trips into the Great Basin since 1960 pilgrimages, for I never fail to come out of this region restored and reenergized. I attribute that to feeling closer to both creation and the creator here,” Francaviglia shares in his introduction.

Wanting to understand the region’s hold on him and others, Francaviglia set out to determine what gives the Great Basin its *genius loci*. As a historical geographer, he felt the place itself—with its topography, vegetation, weather, and climate—could be a major factor in deciphering both the spirit of the place and the human spirit. By employing a broad definition of spirituality, Francaviglia demonstrates that many people in the Great Basin are in search of meaning that depends on, yet transcends, the environment.

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