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Sommario/riassunto	Prompted by the shattering of the bonds between religion and the political order brought about by the Enlightenment, Jean-Jacques Rousseau devised a ""new"" religion (civil religion) to be used by the state as a way of enforcing civic unity. Emile Durkheim, by contrast, conceived civil religion to be a spontaneous phenomenon arising from society itself - a non-coercive force expressing the self-identify or self-definition of a people. In 1967, the American sociologist Robert Bellah rediscovered the concept and applied it to American society in its Durkheimian form. Ever since Bell

