Book reviews

Brian J. Grim, Roger Finke. The price of freedom denied: Religious persecution and conflict in the twenty-first century. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010, 257 p., ISBN 9780521146838, Paperback, £ 16.99, US$ 24.99; Hardcover ISBN 9780521197052, £ 50.00, US$ 85.00. Also available as Adobe Reader eBook and Mobipocket eBooks US$ 20.00.

This is perhaps the best and most important publication on the topic of religious freedom to appear in recent years. Two statisticians of religion, Brian J. Grim, known as the head researcher of the study "Global Restrictions on Religion" of the Pew Forum (http://pew forum.org/docs/?DocID=491), and Roger Finke, a professor of sociology and director of Religion Data Archives, show that religious freedom contributes to peace and stability within a society and does not endanger it.

Their basic thesis, which is supported by an enormous wealth of examples, statistics, and investigation, is simple: In countries with religious freedom there is much more social peace than in countries without it. Or in other words: The argument of many countries with a dominating majority religion, that they have to keep a check on smaller religions for the sake of social peace, is contradicted by reality.

Restriction of religious freedom is often in the first instance the reason for violent conflicts (p. 67). Religious homogeneity does not guarantee freedom from conflict, but it apparently encourages tensions.

Particularly noticeable is the study of Samuel Huntington's theory that assumes violence and unrest are the consequences of a clash of civilizations. This thesis, according to the authors, does not do justice to the internal diversity found within religions and cultures (pp. 62-68), for instance the tension between Sunnites and Shiites within an Islamic country. All of the available figures contradict the thesis that it is the tension between cultures which can cause additional tensions (pp.77-82). It is rather in a certain sense the suppression of these tensions in favor of an alleged monoculture in a country which intensifies the tensions.

Between the middle of 2000 and the middle of 2007 there were, of 143 countries, 123 countries (86%) in which people experienced

violence or were forced to move on the basis of their religious affiliation ("physically abused or displaced," p. 18). In 25 countries there were more than 10,000 people affected (p. 20), conspicuously among them many Islamic countries.

As documented by Grim and Finke, religious freedom viewed on the whole has increased in Christian countries in the sixty years from 1945 to 2005 and has decreased in Islamic countries (p. 172). This means that overall there is less religious freedom in Islamic countries than there was a century ago – and the development still remains regressive!

Two examples in this connection:

1. In Islamic countries (see pp. 160-201), in which there is almost exclusively no religious freedom, the level of violence and the propensity towards civil war is very high.

2. Terrorist movements predominantly come from countries without religious freedom (p. 198). In a few exceptions much less damage is caused in their own countries and they are not active internationally but nationally.

Specifically portrayed in the book among free countries (pp. 88-119) are Japan (a large amount of religious freedom), Brazil (religious freedom with some tension), and Nigeria (religiously split country). Among the countries that are not free (pp. 120-159) one finds China (religion as a threat), India (religion as a social monopoly), and Iran (religion as a social and political monopoly). The Islamic countries presented as a whole (p. 160-201).

This excellent book is proof of the fact that research on the topic of religious freedom is proceeding with more fervor, and it sets a standard for the future.

Thomas Schirrmacher, Director of IIRF, Bonn, Germany

Yacob Tesfai: Holy warriors, infidels and peacemakers in Africa. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2010, 183 p., ISBN 9780230104273, 0230104274, Hardcover, US$ 80.00.

Tesfai's book is a timely intervention for all believers serious about the present and future relevance of their faith. Though it has as its focus the continent of Africa, its applicability is global. Indeed to locate the study in Africa is to ground it firstly in what is perhaps the globe's most

religious continent. In doing so, Tesfai is on safe grounds in carrying out the task of uncovering the workings of religion, its promises and pitfalls, in order to distil lessons for the rest of believing human kind. It bears recalling that rationalists and secularists have in the past postulated the death of religion as only a matter of time. Modernity, it was supposed, would increasingly spell the end of all superstition and religion. On the contrary, such is the dominance of religion in the 21st century, especially after 9/11, that no serious policymaker dares discount religion as a factor.

"Holy Warriors, infidels and peacemakers in Africa" provides a mine of information about the role of religion in different conflicts, past and present, on the continent of Africa. While not losing sight of the fact that for the most part, Africa is not a conflagration of religiously inspired wars, in those specific areas where religion, race, ethnicity and political power connect, much mayhem, bloodshed and untold suffering has been visited on the people of Africa. Religion has helped to construct racial, ethnic and even geopolitical identities, forging groups that see others as outsiders and others as insiders. This has often led to violent conflict in the name of God or religion, or the preservation of self-interest in the guise of religion.

Among the salient lessons Tesfai draws from the South, East, West, North and the horn of Africa, are the following:

Religion is a powerful, identity forming, even primordial notion that can turn adherents into "holy warriors" against those they imagine to be outside of their group. Such are often labeled 'kaffirs' or 'infidels'. Engaging in acts of war, such as jihad (Islam) or crusades (Christian), against such people is often elevated to an article of faith. It is remarkable that in the conduct of these holy wars, gross human rights violations often occur, unmasking the holy warriors as the infidels they set out to destroy. This is borne out by the experiences of Apartheid South Africa, LRA in Uganda, Charles Taylor in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the Horn of Africa and elsewhere.

When religion sets out to seize political or state power to impose what it believes to be the true way, e.g. through instituting Sharia law, it invariably becomes exclusive and marginalises not only non-adherents, but fellow-believers of that religion who do not share their particular interpretation of the sacred texts of that particular religion. Tesfai decries the fact that the ruling religious elites will have ample

opportunity to usurp power in the name of God. Since such a group has claimed to own the interpretative tools of the law in the name of the Divine, it alone has the authority and exclusive right to know the difference between right and wrong. He quotes Sudanese writer Mohammed Salih as saying: "If the state power is divine, then politics is not more that exercising God's will by an authoritarian Muslim elite that controls the state under the name of Islam" (p. 142).

The religions (notably Christianity and Islam) tend to have international networks that have the potential of globalising their influence, positive or negative. The Christian West, for instance, is often seen as embracing the global project of the "war on terror", and thus being inherently anti-Muslim. The Muslim world, on the other hand, with its notion of the umma, has global aspirations of imposing Islam as God's way for the world. These internationalist tendencies have the effect of complicating local contexts, and flaring up and regionalising conflicts that may otherwise be localised.

Religions do not only have within them the seeds of conflict and death. They also have the seed of life and peace. If correctly nurtured, seeds of peace can lead to the flourishing of hope in communities. Tesfai tracks effective peace projects driven by religious leaders from different contexts. These are compelling examples of how the redeeming features of most religions can be harvested for peace in the world.

The contribution of religion to nation-building is best served in humility, in the transparency of the public square, where all are able to participate freely. This is more so in the emerging global consensus of human rights for all.

Tesfai's book is an important manual for peace-builders everywhere, as well as those interested in discerning how religion can play a more positive role in the construction of social values. Its strength is in adequately profiling the pitfalls of the misuse of religion as well as unmasking the self-interest of religious warlords, extremists and those who imagine that translating the sacred texts into public policy is a matter that can be done naively and self-righteously.

Religionists need secular society as much as secular society needs religion. About Charles Taylor's atrocities, Tesfai notes: "In the judicial process, the infidel side of the holy warrior was exposed to the world,

not by a tribunal of a theological judgment, but by instruments of human justice." (p. 43)

He helpfully draws attention to empirical evidence of constructive peace-building in different contexts plagued by conflicts and tension.

It is indeed a valuable contribution to the tool kits of religious leaders as well as policymakers and social commentators.

Moss Ntlha, Johannesburg, South Africa

Yusufu Turaki: Tainted legacy – Islam, colonialism and slavery in Northern Nigeria. McLean, VA: Isaac Publishing 2010, 210 p., ISBN 978-0982521830, US$ 17.99.

Tainted Legacy is a culmination of nearly three decades of study of four epochal movements and their continuing impacts on present-day Nigeria. The phenomena of British colonialism, Christian missionaries, Traditional Religion, and Islam and the Sokoto Caliphate constitute four distinct historical legacies (p. 10), which continue to respectively account, to a great extent, for the nature and complexities of inter-religious and inter-ethnic relations in Northern Nigeria. Written by a Nigerian professor of Theology and Social Ethics, the book unearths the enduring grim legacy of Islamic colonialism and slavery in Northern Nigeria. So much has been written about Western colonialism and trans-Atlantic slave trade, but Islamic colonial exploits, trans-Saharan slave trade and the East African slave trade with Arabia, the Middle East and India have not come under the same intense scrutiny. Professor Turaki argues: "The reality is that Islam and Arabs, more than any other religion or people, imposed colonialism and institutional slavery on traditional Africans. Then African Muslims expanded the system. So Africans share the responsibility for slavery with Europeans and Arabs." (p. 13).

Relying on numerous original archival and scholarly sources as well as on primary data collection, he establishes, with depth, the argument that Muslim and non-Muslim relations and the ongoing conflicts in the central Nigerian Middle Belt are the products of historical and socio-political factors that nurtured and sustained dominance-subordination relationships between Muslims and non-Muslim groups in pre-colonial and colonial times respectively. The British amalgamation of the country in 1914 and the lumping of northern areas under one administrative region created the potential for

conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims. The British colonial administration, through the adoption of Indirect Rule, simply added an overlay on an already existing Hausa and Fulani Muslim hegemony in Northern Nigeria.

Christianity and Christian missions are often disproportionately blamed for "undermining" the traditions and culture of African peoples. This book offers a comprehensive perspective which captures the missing link in that verdict. The coming of Christianity to West Africa predated Islam. Northern African Christians introduced Christianity to West Africa. However, Christianity did not gain a significant foothold in the region before it was overrun by Islam through conquests in North Africa and elsewhere that spread out. The spreading of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa through peaceful means was consolidated by the jihads, which fast-tracked the forceful Islamisation of the peoples and thus, "Islam largely replaced traditional religion, culture and all traces of Christianity in the Sahara." (p. 36). Christianity was later reintroduced to West Africa from Europe and North America, coinciding with European colonialism. Turaki explains how Muslims have used the propaganda of equating European colonialism and Christian missions to discredit Christianity. Nevertheless, the reality was not exactly the same. The colonial government in Nigeria aligned itself with the Hausa and Fulani Muslim oligarchy, sustained the subjugation of non-Muslims by Muslims (although compelling Muslims to also abandon slavery), and barring Christian missionaries from operating in Muslim areas.

An in-depth elaboration of the range of Islamic colonialism and slavery in Northern Nigeria is presented, taking historical, geographical, social and political factors and their composite impacts into account. By delving into Islamic theology, sacred texts and doctrines, the author explains the spiritual basis of Islamic colonialism and slavery. By implication of these analyses one may conclude that the Hausa and Fulani Muslims of Northern Nigeria draw their inspiration to dominate and subjugate non-Muslims from Islamic traditions, and have elected themselves to assume rule over others. Those who resisted this self-styled imposition are likely to invite the wrath of the Hausa and Fulani Muslim hegemonic forces. The Muslim-Christian conflicts in Northern Nigeria are typical examples. At the end, Turaki went beyond diagnosis to explore common grounds for entrenching mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence among Muslims and Christians in Nigeria by emphasizing the interconnectedness. He made a passionate appeal: "We

must all, together, find ways of enhancing, promoting and protecting our common destiny as humans and Nigerians. We must affirm those of our religious values that promote our common wellbeing and put aside those that promote hate and discrimination. Extremist and belligerent values that sow seeds of discord must be discarded." (p. 168).

This book has a lot to offer to everyone who is puzzled and concerned about Muslim-Christian relations and incessant sectarian violence in Northern Nigeria. It will help the reader to understand the intricacy of religious persecution and its persistence in Northern Nigeria. The book also provides tremendous "insights into the current religious and cultural conflict between the West (North America and Europe) and the resurgent and militant Islam in the Middle East and Arab-dominated North Africa." (p. 14).

Yakubu Joseph, Tübingen, Germany

Charlene P. E. Burns: More moral than God: Taking responsibility for religious violence. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield 2008, 147 p., ISBN 9780742558687, 0742558681, US$ 65.00.

Burns gives us an unflinching assessment into the core of religious violence through the lens of religious history, psychoanalysis, philosophy and archetypal and social psychology. Burns first posits that religion, as an acting agent, is not necessarily the main cause of religious violence, but has something more to do with the individual actors who believe in certain reified religious ideas.

After looking at the scriptural texts of the world's main religions, including scriptural justifications for both violence and peace, Burns maintains that, "people make choices which lead to violence. Those choices may begin with interpretation of scripture or with the desire to possess resources that are in the hands of others. Whatever the justification for it, human beings, not scriptural texts and not 'religion', are the acting agents when violence occurs."

Burns then describes the role of globalization including uneven development especially within borders of nations that bring additional stress and the rise of nationalism among an atmosphere of cultural secularization. She quotes Jurgensmeyer who asserts that, "the cause was the sense of a loss of identity and control in the modern world… a reaction to humiliation and emasculation resulting from economic frustrations." Religion, then, is not the initial problem, but the medium

through which alienation, marginalization and social frustration are potentially expressed.

Later, Burns gives this warning, "Once an act has been sanctified, or made holy, by its association with the will of the divine, the believer may engage in violence with impunity even if it contradicts general moral teachings of the faith. Through a process of moral disengagement and cognitive redefinition, it becomes more acceptable, for example, for a Christian to kill another person in order to eliminate evil in the world." She goes on to cite James Waller's chilling conclusion that the majority of people who participated in the genocides of the last century were not psychopathic, but ordinary people. His record includes the killing of almost two million Armenians by a large Turkish populace, psychiatric evaluations of Nazi war criminals and documentation of the Rwanda genocide.

A good part of the book is devoted to a discussion of Jungian concepts of the collective unconscious, archetypes and psychoanalytic theory. The chapter on Jung's epistemology, including his deistic treatise *Answer to Job,* left me with a God who is cold and distant. After distilling the chapter, I did however feel that there is something about levels of trauma and unforgiveness hovering about in our collective unconscious and the possibility that we can blindly create immoral God-images that can lead to violence. This is where Burns exhorts us, through the title, that we should strive as individuals and communities to become more moral than the "shadow" images of God that propel seemingly ordinary people toward the dark and blindside of violence.

As a trauma therapist, working with survivors of religious violence, I resonated most with Burns' description of psychologist Heinz Kohut. He postulated that, "since shame is connected with feelings of weakness and inadequacy it is more likely to stimulate aggression." Furthermore, a narcissistic person who is trying to compensate for his feelings of inferiority that arise in the face of shame can lead them, in a rage, to exert violent power over others. Since Kohut was foremost in the study of the use of empathy and compassion, we find a real key to helping people confront their blindness and develop a sense of worth before the 'shame → guilt → retaliation' cycle ensues.

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Marianne Heimbach-Steins & Heiner Bielefeldt: Religionen und Religionsfreiheit - Menschenrechtliche Perspektiven im Spannungsfeld von Mission und Konversion. (Bamberger Interreligiöse Studien 7), Würzburg: Ergon 2010, 206 p., ISBN 978-3-89913-729-3, € 32.00.

"Religions and religious freedom: perspectives of human rights within the tension between mission and conversion" was the topic of a symposium in 2009 by "Justitia et Pax", the main Roman Catholic consulting committee in Germany on questions of international responsibility.

International and interreligious questions of religious freedom are a field of bitter and long conflict. This is mostly because the important religions all proclaim their own unique validity, to the exclusion of others'. Religious freedom on the other hand inevitably involves a public competition between religions.

The contributions to the symposium documented in this book are divided into three parts. The authors in the first part seek, from different approaches, to determine and specify what the human right of "religious freedom" is. Bielefeldt, on the basis of legal principle of human dignity, stresses that the subjects of the human right of "religious freedom" are human beings, not institutions. The freedom of conversion without compulsion is the specific theme of the contribution by Robbers. Jahangir adds a number of empirical observations, in particular from his activity for the UN. Özsoy maintains that the Qur'an, correctly interpreted, does not contradict the principle of religious freedom. Heimbach-Steins concludes this first part with a consideration of the right of religious freedom in recent Roman-Catholic thinking.

The second part of the book concentrates more specifically on the right of mission as part of religious freedom and to what extent the principle of religious freedom embraces the practice and aims of mission. It is necessary to specify the limits of the claims of a mission on the one hand and the right of people not to be hindered in their religion but to practise it on the other. Different positions on this question are expressed. Heidemanns argues on the basis of the theology of the Second Vatican Council that the idea of contradiction between religious freedom and missions is a misunderstanding. Müller argues on similar lines, focusing on examples in Indonesia. Schirrmacher presents a Protestant evangelical point of view, Delikostantis a Christian Orthodox one. Sievers contributes a Jewish point of view, Ucar an Islamic one.

The third part consists of two contributions in which the main tensions and challenges in relation to the human right of religious freedom are examined on a more general level. Wendel deals with the problem of violence in relation to the claims to universal validity of the religions. Mensick asks what contributions religious communities can make to the policy of the state.

This book is extremely rich in information, but its point of view is mainly a Roman-Catholic one. [Editors' note: See www.iirf.eu for a more detailed review.]

George Bransby-Windholz, Cape Town, South Africa

Johannes A. van der Ven: Human rights or religious rules? Leiden: Brill 2010, 448 p., ISBN 9789004183049, US$ 198.00.

The author is chair of Comparative Empirical Theology at Radbout University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands. This book is the first of a series to be published by Brill on "Empirical Research in Religion and Human Rights." Van der Ven's conceptual framework contrasts lives and societies governed according to a 'human rights culture' that stresses 'direct, active, subjective rights that are rooted in the dignity of the human person' with those that have a predominantly 'religious rules' culture that stresses 'justice, solidarity and love.' He readily acknowledges that these two sets of categories are porous and can overlap, and he seeks to clarify their differences, similarities, tensions and compatibilities by means of 'historical, empirical and theoretical research,' wherein the empirical side is largely the use of survey research to elucidate people's attitudes, views and actions with respect to human rights.

The first part discusses the meaning of religion and religions, especially the question of religious identity understood internally and externally. The second part examines religion and human rights, particularly on how we might establish a foundation for human rights. The third part examines the relation of religion and what he calls a 'human rights culture,' which, using questionnaires, examines the acceptance of human rights, especially religious freedom, by Christian, Muslim, and non-religious groups in the Netherlands. Overall, he finds that, while the relations are complex, religion can often be supportive of a human rights culture.

Van der Ven makes no claim to provide answers, but, even allowing for this caution, his discussion of human rights and religion sometimes become so diffuse so that it is not clear precisely what is being argued.

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Paul A. Holloway: Coping with prejudice: 1 Peter in social-psychological perspective. WUNT 244, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2009, xv + 317 p., ISBN 978-3-16-149961-6, € 89.00.

This monograph examines how 1 Peter advises its readers on how to cope with prejudice and discrimination. Holloway argues that "1 Peter marks one of the earliest attempts, perhaps the earliest attempt, by a Christian author to craft a more or less comprehensive response to anti-Christian prejudice and its outcomes" (2). And,

> Unlike later Apologists, however, who also wrote in response to anti-Christian prejudice, the author of 1 Peter does not seek to influence directly the thoughts and actions of those hostile to Christianity, but writes instead for his beleaguered coreligionists, consoling them in their suffering and advising them on how to cope with popular prejudice and the persecution it engendered (2).

The author examines the dynamics of social prejudice and its effects on those who suffer from it. Prejudice may be defined as "a negative social attitude directed toward the members of a particular social group simply because of their group membership. It consists of three elements: a cognitive element: stereotyping, an affective element: prejudiced feelings, and a behavioral element: discrimination and hostility" (38f).

Further chapters cover theories and practices of consolation in Greco-Roman and early-Jewish traditions in order to understand contemporary notions of consolation and "How people cope with prejudice: the findings of modern social psychology". Coping is understood as "all conscious volitional efforts to regulate emotion, thought, behavior, physiology, and the environment in response to stressful events or circumstances" (134f).

The remaining chapters examine all of 1 Peter and its rhetorical strategies for coping with the anti-Christian prejudice identified earlier: 1 Peter 1:1-12: initial words of consolation; 1 Peter 1:13-2:10: coping with prejudice through apocalyptic "disidentification"; 1 Peter 2:11-3:12: coping with prejudice through "behavioral compensation"; 1 Peter 3:13–4:11: coping with prejudice through "attributional ambiguity" and

1 Peter 4:12–5:14: concluding words of consolation. Holloway concludes that the letter presents three strategies on how to cope with prejudice. These strategies resemble strategies employed by stigmatised groups today.

Holloway's study offers a convincing analysis and interpretation of the nuanced strategies employed in 1 Peter. It is helpful that Holloway compares these strategies with ancient consolation literature to show how and where there are parallels between this corpus and 1 Peter and where the author uses new consolation motifs that are shaped by the gospel. It is likewise welcome that Holloway examines 1 Peter against the backdrop of the coping strategies of modern social psychology. Holloway's study is also helpful for the practical task of comforting, encouraging and strengthening the Christians in today's world that are faced with prejudice and worse.

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Mike Falkenstine: The Chinese puzzle. Putting the pieces together for a deeper understanding of China and her church. Longwood, FL: Xulon Press 2008, 152 p., ISBN 9781606471432, US$ 14.99; Related website: http://chinesepuzzlebook.blogspot.com.

The author brings together many issues which are pertinent to consider in regard to ministry in China, particularly for readers in the West. He considers historical developments which especially influenced the growth of and perspectives toward Christianity in China. He also looks at current perceptions, some of which in his opinion mitigate the ministry effectiveness which Westerners could have; and he provides advice, recommendations, and examples for serving the Church in China.

The book is a concise easy-read; and while it does not claim to be a full treatise on all the issues covered, unfortunately the rationale or factual basis for some broad conclusions are not clear, and the examples provided often seem anecdotal instead of representative. Despite the author's years on the ground, the book doesn't present a depth of research on the current situation and has a pervasive flavor of incomplete consideration of the influence and nature of China's government.

For example, in addressing the question of the extent of ongoing religious persecution, the author would have done well to draw from China's human rights reports by international government agencies. Referencing such reports would have also deepened the discussion on the ruling Communist Party and its influence relative to the church – such as the system for job retention and promotion within Party ranks (which often requires abusive behavior or the condoning of it) and the confirmed social controls by government. These controls, which include diverse issues such as strictures on media, family planning, cyber surveillance, government propaganda, and directives for theological training, have a significant and negative influence on the native church and foreign Christians' engagement. It is hoped that any future version of "The Chinese Puzzle" would discuss such issues, to present a more complete picture and a sharpened tool for ministry.

On a final note, the author's description of the acceptable extent of government's authority is problematic: from Chapter 2, "The Chinese Government has set guidelines and boundaries around what are acceptable religious conduct and activities in China. There is no getting around this fact"; and "[t]his is their country, and the governmental authorities feel it is their 'right' to put controls on religious affairs" (p. 47, 48). According to such logic, it was the Roman authority's "right" to control its internal religious affairs – hence the lawbreakers included Jesus, Paul, Peter, etc. who should be dealt with according to their law; also, it was regarded as the then Great Britain government's authority to ban the Bible from being translated into English; and John Wesley certainly should have been jailed for violation the law (*Act of Toleration* 1689) for preaching outdoors because "meetings for worship must be held in the registered meeting houses" according to the law.

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Errata: The author of the bookreview on Bevans/Gros "Evangelization and Religious Freedom" in IJRF 3(2010)1:139 was Dr. Thomas *Weißenborn*. We apologize for the inadvertent change of his name, apparently by an auto-speller.