

to protect Christians who are being persecuted for their faith around the globe. Joustra and den Dulk identify theological issues that might prevent denominations from engagement on religious freedom. One of the main practical reasons is that it is hard to identify 'success' to show supporters that it is a cause worth pursuing.

The final chapter is both a plea for the North American church to engage on religious freedom and an action plan to carry this out. Getting churches to engage requires the development of a social movement to promote religious freedom as a matter of social justice. This involves reorienting the church. The most important practical way to do this is informed prayer. Most denominations are global so denominations can glean information from Christian brothers and sisters in other countries. As well, the authors highlight the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church as a source of information and a call to prayer.

Calvin University Press has additional resources for churches and Christians wishing to engage further on religious persecution posted on the website for the book. Hopefully, this can serve as an on-going resource for churches.

This short book can be a helpful resource for churches and Christians who want to learn the basics about religious persecution who also want to take action. It is from a Christian Reformed foundation but does not limit itself to that tradition's perspective. It is also primarily addressed to the North American church, although it will also be a useful resource for global Christians. For a short book, it is packed with information and suggestions for action.

References

- Calvin University Press, "Calvin Shorts". Available at: <https://calvin.edu/press/calvin-shorts/>
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Religion, liberty and the jurisdictional limits of law

Iain T. Benson and Barry W. Bussey (eds).

Toronto: LexisNexis Canada, 2017, 414 pp., ISBN 9780433495628, Softcover, CAN\$120.00.

This book compiles sixteen papers presented at a University of Toronto symposium. All references below are to authors whose works appear in this publication. Whilst

the opinions contained in the book differ as to, for example, how far the state and the law should encroach upon religious life, there is less disagreement amongst the authors than might have been expected.

As contributor Janet Epp Buckingham notes, religion and law are both systems with much to say about society, but are somewhat incomprehensible to each other. Iain Benson explains how the healthy interaction of religion and law can be threatened in two opposite extremes, merger and alienation – both of which have their proponents. Additionally, the book is permeated with discussion of taboos such as those related to sex (same-sex marriage, in particular, is featured in most chapters) and politics (especially the role of the state); the liberal democratic social totem of equality is deconstructed (for example, by John von Heyking referring to Tocqueville); and Paul Cliteur discusses where free speech should be curbed (such as that of religious radicals). These subthemes could undoubtedly have generated more fundamental differences of opinion amongst academics in other contexts.

Identifying common threads, most of the authors (1) depict an aspect of the dialectical relationship between law and religion as systems whose structures and agents can further or constrain human freedom and well-being; (2) argue for greater protection of religious freedom; and (3) in terms of scope, discuss these topics within the context of Western liberal democracies, illustrating their points by means of prominent rulings on cases involving freedom of religion or belief in Canada and the UK in particular.

This book is a useful resource in the light of rising religious illiteracy in the West and a lowering tolerance of religious morality claims, which are not in sync with 'progressive' social norms. The authors underscore the importance of safeguarding freedom of religion or belief in order to protect a pluralistic social fabric and avoid a tyranny of the majority in an ever-changing world. They do not provide many answers, but they raise interesting questions and provide useful insights.

Several authors in this publication seek to dispel some urban myths common amongst university students and legal practitioners: that religion is easily separable from other areas of human activity (e.g. David Cayley's preface); that religion is violent (e.g. Cayley, von Heyking and Alvin Esau); that secularism equals neutrality (whatever the latter means in practice); that law creates (rather than simply recognizes) religious rights (e.g. Benson); that radical religious beliefs can be controlled by the progress of secular reason (e.g. Cliteur); that some human rights are more important than others, rather than being part of a mutually reinforcing framework (e.g. Buckingham); that beliefs are simply chosen (e.g. Leigh); that religious beliefs can be fully excluded or insulated from political decision-making, and that exit from religious groups is costless (e.g. Richard Moon); or, that religious associations divide society, rather than contributing to its cohesion vis-à-vis modern individualism (e.g.

Buckingham). As Cliteur points out, Martin Luther King would certainly have qualified as a provocateur with unwelcome views. This raises difficult questions as to when it is indeed necessary to limit dissenting voices or provocateurs in public spaces.

Journalists and politicians could find this book useful as they consider how religious freedom can be responsibly discussed in a public square that seeks to enhance diversity but not conformity. The authors offer welcome analyses of why religious freedom is necessary in pluralistic societies, with some describing religion's place in the paternity of key ideas in political philosophy. In this vein, Benson and van Heyking's respective reminders that individual freedom precedes law and that rights precede states' claims on them are particularly valuable. Practically, one key lesson that emerges is the value of identifying concrete disputes when tensions arise between human rights, rather than engaging in abstractions or trivialities; in addition, it is essential to examine the broader context when trying to resolve tensions (e.g. Newman). As such, the book provides a firm basis for reflection on the importance of legal presumption favouring diversity (Benson), and on the need to get the relationship between accommodation and convergence right so as to avoid a pile-up of victims where the legal pursuit of equality effectively undermines the place of religion (as discussed e.g. by Peter Lauwers).

Context is key. The current situation concerning freedom of religion or belief in contemporary Canada cannot be compared to that in the countries from which some of its forebears fled because of their religious identities. However, healthy pluralism requires hard work. This book serves as a reminder that, as Benson notes, concepts of equality, neutrality and inclusion are also context-dependent.

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Advancing Freedom of Religion or Belief for All

Elizabeta Kitanovic and Fr Aimilianos Bogiannou (eds.)

Globethics.net, 3, Geneva 2016, 192 pp., ISBN 9782889311361. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3o2GXfg>.

Established in 1959, the Conference of European Churches (CEC) resulted from the Cold War and the need to deal with fragmenting European politics. The CEC worked closely with churches of the former Soviet Union to provide a forum to encourage and support ministers and churches suffering discrimination or persecution by placing them in contact with other ministers from the rest of Europe. On the practical level, in the last two decades, the CEC has collaborated with several international organisations such as the United Nations, the Organization for Security