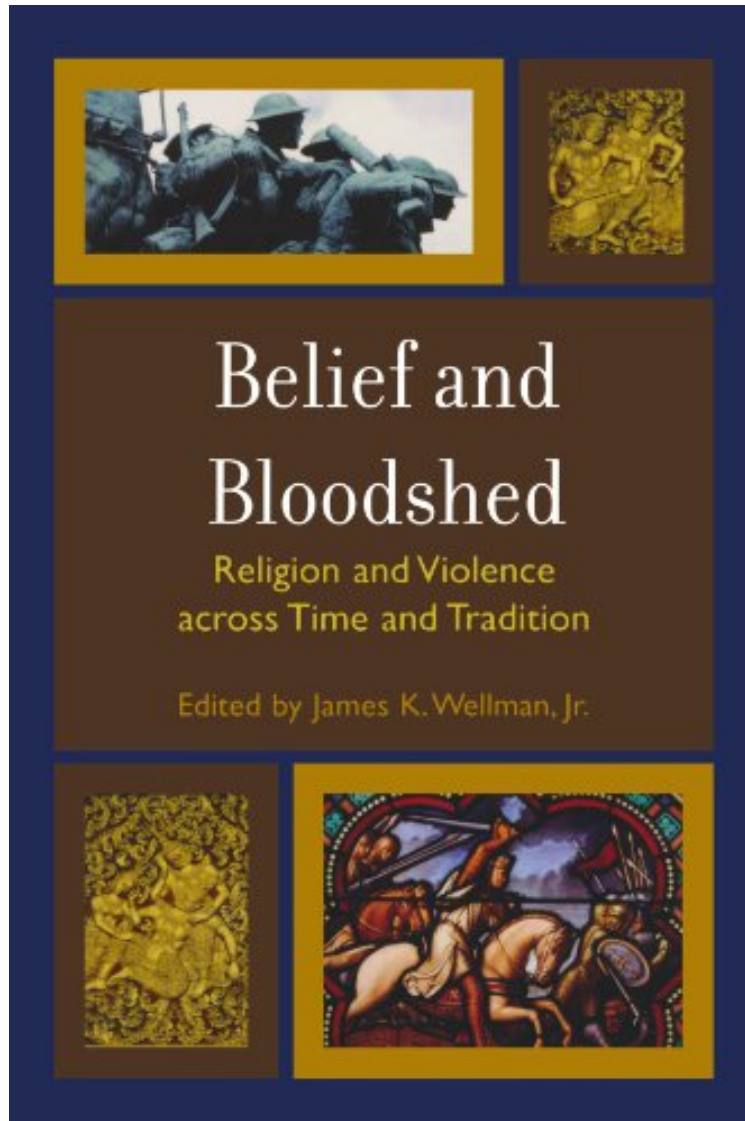


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Belief and Bloodshed: Religion and Violence across Time and Tradition

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From Brand: Rowman Littlefield Publishers : Belief and Bloodshed: Religion and Violence across Time and Tradition before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Belief and Bloodshed: Religion and Violence across Time and Tradition:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Violence is not just in the pastBy Eric"Belief and Bloodshed: Religion and Violence across time and Tradition," is precisely what this book delivers. This book is a collection of

essays that illustrate the role of violence in religion, regardless of the particular faith, region, or time in which the religion is found. The book is organized in chronological order, which is beneficial in developing the idea of the book, which is to show that no faith is truly free of violence. This is obtained by beginning in the ancient world, and taking the reader through examples of great acts of violence, legitimized by the faith of the people carrying them out. This will not lead the reader very shocked, as most people have an understanding of violence being commonplace in the ancient world. Yet as the book progresses through time, and even begins to touch on faiths that are more recognizable to our current time, we are shown that violence, often extreme violence, has maintained itself as a major theme in religion. "Belief in Bloodshed" does not just simply tell stories of how different faiths are responsible for these acts of physical violence. The authors explain the thought process behind these acts from several different facets of human thought and reasoning. The violence is explained by the views surrounding the particular faith of the scenario, as well as what the individuals in the faith were likely to have thought to justify it personally. We, as the reader, are also introduced to the important and influential people of these times, and are shown how their personal interpretations of their roles in their faith contributed to the actions taken. The format and approaches to the subject matter taken by these authors is what truly clarifies the position taken within these pages. It becomes clear that religious violence and holy war are not just for some of the faiths that modern American society has come to associate with violent acts. All religions, and divisions of those religions, have in some way been involved in physical violent suffering, and not necessarily just in their distant past.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Informative and interesting

By Baya D. Walls

Belief and Bloodshed is compiled and edited by James K. Wellmann Jr., an associate professor of Comparative Religion at the University of Washington. In it he explores his thesis stated in the introduction that "conflict and violence are not tangential to our understanding of religion, but need to be part and parcel of what it means to study religion as a force in culture and politics" (Wellmann 2007, 4). Therefore, as the focus is on the political and cultural power of religion and its connection to outbursts of violence, he presents thirteen different articles authored by academic experts in their respective fields investigating and expanding upon his statement in light of the tradition they are most familiar with.

The book itself is broken up in two parts: the first five chapters deal with various historical accounts of religious connection to conflicts or the peaceful attempts to avoid bloodshed, chapter six through twelve highlight more recent examples. The book ends with the last chapter thirteen connecting the past with the present illustrating that not much has changed and that the religious aspects of violence now follow the same parameters as they did in the past. Bruce Lincoln shows how political propaganda uses religious argumentation in the same way in sixth century BCE Mesopotamia as it does in the United States of America during the early twentyfirst century CE. The contributions presented by Wellmann examine an array of different historical, cultural and religious backgrounds. The reader not only encounters examples stemming from the Abrahamic traditions, but also Mesopotamian, Roman, Chinese, Buddhist, and eclectic examples of spiritual paths in connection to their inclination to use religious justification for or against violent actions in order to achieve their agenda. It is this diversity that makes Belief and Bloodshed a well-balanced source to gain a greater understanding of this controversial issue.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Violent Villages

By clever pen name Wellman has covered a diverse set of cultures and incidents across thousands of years that, in one way or another, involve both violence and religion. He provides examples of when religious people intend specifically to use egregious violence, when violence was quelled by the devout, or even when violence came from secular society to persecute a set of religious beliefs. Indeed, the majority of the examples suggest a correlation between violent acts and religious beliefs, but it is still unclear from the book whether strength of religion is a cause, as opposed to both religion and violent tendencies being the result of the kind of people that deal in absolute convictions. One must keep in mind that there are plenty of religious folks who never hurt a fly that aren't documented here, but I digress. It is difficult to further summarize Wellman's book without going on and on because each chapter is a new stand-alone story, but the best unifying thread I can find is the idea that religion exists in the world of intense passion, and with that passion people are willing to sacrifice lives in their pursuit of the divine.

Intended for students as well as scholars of religion and violence, Belief and Bloodshed discusses how the relationship between religion and violence is not unique to a post-9/11 world—it has existed throughout all of recorded history and culture. The book makes clear the complex interactions between religion, violence, and politics to show that religion as always innocent or always evil is misguided, and that rationalizations by religion for political power and violence are not new. Chronologically organized, the book shows religiously motivated violence across a variety of historical periods and cultures, moving from the ancient to medieval to the modern world, ending with an essay comparing the speeches of an ancient king to the speeches of the current U.S. President.

This cross-disciplinary group of scholars provides fascinating studies across historical periods and religious traditions—all centered around the crucial theoretical point that religious group identities both promote solidarity and can facilitate violence. An important contribution to a timely and urgent conversation. (Rhys H. Williams, University of Cincinnati, Editor, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*)

The case studies in this interesting volume show that religion and

violence have been associated throughout history and around the world. From the ancient Near East to 20th century China and contemporary Thailand, violent acts have been committed in the name of religion. Drawing on diverse traditions and theoretical perspectives, this lively volume enlarges our understanding of this dark attraction between bloodshed and belief. (Mark Juergensmeyer, University of California, Santa Barbara) Belief and Bloodshed has a definite advantage over similar ones in that it offers a fairly global and historical perspective on its subject. ...All those interested in the nexus of religion and violence - either from a purely academic standpoint or with practical intentions toward the reclamation of faith from its historical and lamentable darker tendencies - would be well served by this important book. (Encyclopedia Of Arkansas History and Culture)Of the many volumes published on religious violence in the last few years, few rise to the level of Belief and Bloodshed.... A definite advantage over similar ones in that it offers a fairly global and historical perspective on its subject, rather than focusing on the monotheistic traditions and the modern age, as is popular....All those interested in the nexus of religion and violenceeither from a purely academic standpoint or with practical intentions toward the reclamation of faith from its historical and lamentable darker tendencieswould be well served by this important book. (Ploughshares Magazine)Global in scope and acutely sensitive to local manifestations of religious violence in ancient and modern times, this is the best anthology on religion and violence available today. No one interested in the relationship between religion and violence can afford to ignore this intelligent and well-rounded discussion. (Hector Avalos, associate professor of religious studies, Iowa State University; author of Fighting Words: The Origins of Religious Violence)About the AuthorJames Wellman is associate professor in the Comparative Religion Program at the University of Washington.