

CRITICAL BOOK REVIEWS

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Atlas of the World's Religions, (2nd edition), ed. by Ninian Smart and Frederick Denny. Oxford University Press, 2007. 272 pages. ISBN 978-0-19533-401-2. Hardcover. US\$110.00.

Ninian Smart was the editor of the first edition of *Atlas of the World's Religions* which appeared in 1999 on the verge of a new century. He created the first department in Religious Studies in England at the University of Lancaster in 1967. He also taught at the University of Santa Barbara and wrote numerous books, including *Reason and Faiths* and *Doctrine and Argument in Indian Philosophy*. He served as the President of the American Academy of Religion in 2000 and passed away in 2001.

The editor of the second edition, Frederick Denny, is Emeritus Professor of Islamic Studies and the History of Religions at the University of Colorado, Boulder. He has published a number of books on Islamic Studies including *An Introduction to Islam* (3rd edition) and has also served on the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Religion for many years.

The Atlas attempts to trace the changes in the religious world since the early times through dynamic maps, pictures and well written articles. The book stresses the geographical dimension, an often overlooked aspect of the spread and hindrance of religious movements. It also notes the rise and fall of various religions in both ancient and modern times and gives an excellent overview of their history. The Atlas comes with a very valuable bibliography for further study (pp. 249-250), an extensive glossary of religious terms (pp. 240-248) and a comprehensive index to the geographical places noted in the book (pp. 251-271).

The second edition contains new cartographic as well as substantial new materials, including the spread and influence of the Charismatic Movement and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The Atlas attempts to reveal how the world has changed since the events of 9/11 as well as the process of globalization in our emerging internet age.

The Atlas begins with two introductory sections entitled Religion Today (pp. 14-25) and the Historical Geography of Religion (pp. 26-43). The first chapter gives a good overview of where the major religions are located in the world, the approximate numbers of adherents, globalization, modern pilgrimages and how different faiths are responding to the challenges of ecology. The second section attempts to look at just where and how different faiths have spread from the first organized religions to the present. In this chapter religious language, scriptures, names and places are also discussed.

The third and main section of the Atlas deals with an illustrated discussion of the ten major world religions. It begins with Hinduism (pp. 44-65) by tracing the origins of the faith in the Ganges Valley to the emergence of independent India after British rule. Next comes a good discussion of the birth and influence of Buddhism (pp. 66-79) which arose in reaction to the overt pluralism of Hinduism and eventually became the major religion in Southeast and Central Asia.

The dominant religions of East Asia (pp. 80-97), including Confucianism, Daoism, Chinese Buddhism and the spiritual heritages found in Korea, Japan and Indonesia, are discussed in the third chapter. The Pacific region (pp. 98-107) concludes the eastern spread of religion by talking about the primal faiths of Oceania, Christianity in the Pacific, along with references to Australia and the Pacific Islands.

Chapters five and six deal with religions that developed in the cradle of civilization, namely the Ancient Near East and Europe (pp. 108-127) and Judaism (pp. 128-147). The religions of Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Zoroastrianism, Greece and Rome are discussed, along with tracing the ebb and flow of Judaism from Bible times to the present, including a section on Zionism and the Holocaust.

Chapter seven is the longest in the book and details the rise, spread and influence of Christianity (pp. 148-185). A very excellent chapter on Islam follows (pp. 186-213) with relevant information on all the important historical periods. The final two chapters deal with religion in Africa (pp. 214-231), along with the Indigenous Religions (pp. 232-239).

In my opinion, this Atlas provides an extremely valuable resource for high schools, colleges, seminaries and university teachers and students. The writing is clear and of a non-technical nature. All of the subjects are covered in two large pages with excellent maps, charts and pictures to accompany the text. It was a great resource to me recently when I was given the task to teach a graduate level class on world religions here in Asia. I found that the organization, writing and illustrations in the book to be clear and very useful, a real compendium of valuable information. I would highly recommend this second edition and the publisher should be

commended for continuing to update this resource which helps us to understand more clearly past and present religious movements.

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Atlas of Global Christianity, ed. by Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross. Edinburgh University Press, 2009. Pp. xix + 361. ISBN 978-0-7486-3267-0. Hardcover. US\$250.00.

It is not that often you get to write the words, "Landmark," "Seminal" or "Masterpiece" related to the publishing of a new reference book. But these and more superlatives could be used to describe the unprecedented volume I have the privilege to review. I was attending a SEANET Conference on Buddhism in Chiang Mai, Thailand when Todd M. Johnson, one of the editors, introduced this invaluable reference.

Todd M. Johnson is Director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Cromwell Theological Seminary and his publications include the *World Christian Encyclopedia* (2nd edition) and *World Christian Trends*. The other editor, Kenneth R. Ross, is Council Secretary of the Church of Scotland World Mission Council and since 2001 has chaired the Towards 2010 Scottish Council focused on preparations for the centenary of the Edinburgh 1920 World Missionary Conference.

The basic foundation of the atlas was to trace the ebb and flow of Christianity during the last 100 years, from the landmark Edinburgh Conference in 1910 to the present. Within this volume of time, the editors have succinctly traced the fascinating role Christianity has played in relation to other religions and global issues. It is the first scholarly atlas to show the shift of twentieth century Christianity to the Global South and the first to map Christianity on the provincial level.

The book is divided into five parts. Each topic occupies facing pages and thus it is very easy to quickly grasp an overview of a large amount of information. The first section begins with a very excellent introduction in the changes of the major world religions from 1910 to 2010 (pp. 2-45). The current socio-economic and health factors provide a good introduction, before all the major "religions" from the Agnostics to the Zoroastrians are presented.

Each religion is similarly studied with an introduction, top ten list, the religion by country from 1910 to 2010, the percentage change over time, the major traditions, religion by continents, and Christian adherence and growth using the United Nations regions. This first section ends with an insightful and fascinating discussion of Religious Diversity, Growth and