

Michelangelo painted the Sistine ceiling from 1508 to 1512; though P. includes a kind of postscript on the Last Judgment, painted 1536–1541, Michelangelo's vision of the afterlife merits more than an afterthought. Still, this small book offers a very helpful window onto how and why what is likely the world's most famous ceiling continues to command our attention.

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World Religions and Contemporary Issues: How Evolving Views on Ecology, Peace, and Women Are Impacting Faith Today. By Brennan R. Hill. New London, CT: Twenty-Third, 2013. Pp. 367. \$34.95.

Drawing on decades of study and teaching experience, Hill has written and formatted this volume as an introductory-level textbook, with clearly delineated sections and subsections, glossaries of boldfaced key terms, learning texts, discussion questions, and study resources.

The book divides into seven chapters, beginning with “An Introduction to Religion and Its Connection with Social Issues,” continuing with a chapter each on Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and concluding with a chapter on “Interfaith Dialogue.” The exposition is correct and engaging.

While any project of this sort risks the criticism that the author leaves out too much or emphasizes the wrong points, H. supplements his presentation with notes, web links, and bibliography that interested readers may consult for further study and to balance and fill out the analyses. Note, too, his inclusion of biographical sketches that introduce readers to such contemporary figures as Jean Donovan, Shirin Ebadi, Mahatma Gandhi, Thich Nhat Hanh, Judith Helfand, and Desmond Tutu. These stories complement the historical and thematic material, illustrating the actual relevance of religious belief and practice while breaking up the discussion—especially helpful for keeping the attention of nonspecialists.

The accessible style and general content of the book thus would provide a broad range of readers an excellent overview of major world religions and their study. I have ordered the book for my fall 2014 introductory classes on theological foundations, but I would not hesitate to assign it to high school students or to recommend it to family and friends to read in tandem with Vatican II's *Nostra aetate*, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions.

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