

should support, even just by learning about it through reading Boyd's book. The real challenge is to go beyond easy criticisms and begin thinking about solutions. The 2048 project website is a venue to air suggestions. Together, we might indeed be able to create the International Bill of Human Rights.

*Michael Hunter*, Master's degree student, University for Peace, San José, Costa Rica

Nathan C. Funk and Abdul Aziz Said. *Islam and Peacemaking in the Middle East*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2009.

This is an important book for anyone who cares about the Middle East. The first Part gives the context for why religions can be a source of peacemaking and why the typical "us versus them" narrative between the West and the Middle East needs to be re-written. The authors reject the notion of a "clash of civilizations," and they take on stereotypes of "mutual ignorance" and how "imprisonment in hostile narratives" makes peacemaking so difficult (8). They offer a perceptive analysis of how western foreign policies presume that the Islamic world does not have indigenous resources to solve its own problems, and how western involvement in the Middle East has inhibited the latter's ability to carve out its own solutions.

Given the genuinely Middle-Eastern-grown nonviolent resistance, dubbed in 2011 the "April Spring," in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, and Palestine, the book is not only prophetic but becoming more relevant. The authors demonstrate how "policy choices are mediated and constrained by interpretations of history, and by preconceptions about the 'other's' character and behavioral repertoire" (231). They reveal how little the West has engaged with Muslim conceptions of peace, justice, political participation, cultural diversity, economic development, and ecological sustainability (9, 11). Funk and Said adeptly show that it is a misperception to see "the Islamic-Western conflict" as inevitable and unalterable because of "incompatible doctrines and values" (231).

Part Two makes explicit the types of resources Islam can contribute

to peacemaking. The authors categorize these in five ways that provide a thick description of Islamic spirituality, theology, and ethics as related to violence, peace, and justice. Here the reader encounters a diversity of Islamic approaches to peace. The authors hope that “knowledge of this diversity can provide a powerful basis for intercultural bridge building and for innovative policy frameworks” based on shared values, transforming Western and Middle Eastern engagement away from the singular “war on terror” security threat framework and the pervasive view of Islamic culture as “seemingly exotic” (10, 232). This section provides a wealth of information to enrich dialogues between the two groups, and should be required reading both for Muslims in the Middle East as well as the Diaspora and for all westerners engaged with the Muslim Middle East, whether as archaeologists, military/security personnel, academics, diplomats, policy makers, religious workers, development aid workers, or members of other NGOs.

Constructive ideas on how the West and the Middle Eastern Islamic world could cooperate on peacemaking are the subject of Part Three. Here the authors discuss specific recommendations for where constructive actions can be empowered. Aiming primarily at a western policy making/shaping audience, they acknowledge that these proposals are relevant to both stakeholders. Recommendations include creating a “new relationship” in the public discourse of political figures, media analysts and others (252, 253).

Another recommendation is addressing root causes of concerns, fears, and grievances on both sides, instead of manipulating fear-predicated narratives with religious rhetoric, so that opposing points of view are presented in a context acknowledging “shared humanity, interdependent futures, and the pursuit of solutions that respect the basic needs and interest of all concerned parties” (254). Funk and Said discuss strategies for transforming conflict instead of escalating it. They urge strengthening cross-cultural diplomacy through a deeper knowledge of one another’s language, history, and culture, including “religious literacy,” and the inherent complexities (257). They describe what a “multilateral, human security framework” could look like and how it would go beyond simply staking out positions (259). Negotiated, dialogue-based solutions are one way that “Western policies might also include efforts to enhance regional conflict resolution capacity” (260).

Recognizing the strong links to the Diaspora Muslim communities of North America and Europe, and attending to immigrant experiences can also send positive messages. Taking more steps to “ensure inclusion of Muslims in Western societies” will shape Muslim perceptions globally. The degree to which immigrants have a positive experience with education and economic opportunities, freedom of religious expression, respectful coexistence, and a fair rule of law will help diplomatic efforts between different societies (261). “By contributing to the radicalization of young Muslim men, overmilitarization of the ‘war on terror’ has done more to destabilize the Muslim Middle East than to cultivate a basis for sustainable peace” (261). Western approaches abroad need to be consistent with those at home, lest hypocrisy damage the viable democratic projects taking place in the Middle East region (262).

*Islam and Peacemaking in the Middle East* will benefit all who read it not only for its historical information and its insights into Islam as a religious, political, and cultural resource for Middle East peacemaking, but for a better understanding of the nuances of peacemaking where communities face deep-rooted misperceptions, power imbalances, and ongoing trauma. It provides points of contact for doing comparative theologies with Christians, Jews, and others in peace theology and peacebuilding, as well as avenues for dialogue between the Muslim community and the West.

*Susan Kennel Harrison*, PhD candidate, Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology

John G. Stackhouse, Jr. *Making the Best of It: Following Christ in the Real World*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Canadian evangelical theologian John Stackhouse has written a “big, academic book” that articulates a “comprehensive” understanding of culture and the Christian life in light of the reality of God (ix, 4). As the title suggests, the argument of *Making the Best of It* is that discipleship is rightly negotiated in the midst of present-day cultural and political activities. Disciples