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On the other hand, chapter 6 presents an insightful analysis of the various perspectives in regards to an antidiscrimination law meant to protect LGBTQ people. While progressive activists, both secular and religious, thought the Muslims would favor a law that would protect people from discrimination, several of the Muslim leaders connected instead with conservative Catholics over concerns about homosexuality.

Overall, *Muslim American City* provides an in-depth look at a religiously diverse city and how the Muslim residents of Hamtramck contest the liberal-secular ideals of “freedom, agency and power” (219). At times, the book features complicated theoretical language and dry background on the town’s history, diminishing the excellent ethnography and arguments about religion and public space. Nevertheless, it is a relevant addition to the literature on religion in public life and how religious minorities point out the limitations of liberal secularism.

Kristin M. Peterson, Boston College

Baha’i Faith: The Basics. By Christopher Buck. Routledge, 2021. 262 pages. \$92.00 hardcover; \$18.36 softcover; ebook available.

The activities, focus, and concepts in the Baha’i world are changing so rapidly at present, especially in the area of developing new approaches to community building, that any published introductory book soon becomes out-of-date. So it is good to see another introductory book on the Baha’i Faith published, in particular since it surveys recent developments well. For anyone wishing to find out about the Baha’i Faith and the current activities of the Baha’i community, this book can be recommended. Christopher Buck presents an insider view of the Baha’i Faith, but one that is descriptive rather than prescriptive. It is perhaps just as well that he is an insider since an outsider might have difficulty keeping up with, and understanding, the changes that are occurring in the Baha’i community, especially since these changes are occurring at varying rates in different communities.

After an introduction, Buck focuses on Baha’i theological and ethical teachings, which he puts under the general rubric of “Spiritual Teachings.” In the third chapter he moves on to the social teachings. Chapter 4 deals with the history of the Baha’i Faith, in which the author also outlines an important topic in the Baha’i teachings—the Covenant, which authorizes the succession of leadership in the Baha’i Faith. The next chapter looks at Baha’i scripture and authoritative texts. Buck discusses some of the key texts and gives examples of the different types of works written by the founders and central figures of the Baha’i Faith, as well as texts from the present leadership, the Universal House of Justice and its ancillary institutions. Chapter 6 looks at the organizational

structure of the global Baha'i community, examining its elected and appointed institutions at the global, national, regional, and local levels.

The next chapters address Baha'i community life, social action, and how contemporary events are affecting discussions within the Baha'i Faith. Much of Baha'i community life at present revolves around bringing the Baha'i social teachings to the level of social action in community development activities. Parallel to this activity is the endeavor by Baha'is to enter into the relevant discourses—such as the equality of women and men, human rights, community building, the role of religion in society—that are going on in the wider community and to bring to bear on these their insights based on the Baha'i teachings and community experiences. The book concludes by surveying the vision of the Baha'i Faith for the world of the future. What sort of world are Baha'is trying to create?

Buck presents all of this information in a clear and well-structured manner. He accompanies his own words with appropriate extracts from authoritative Baha'i texts to illustrate the points that he is making. He also draws on examples of the activities of the Baha'i community from different locations across the world.

There are several minor points of criticism I would like to make, however. The history chapter focuses almost exclusively on the central leadership of the Baha'i community in each era. I found very little information about what was happening in the wider Baha'i community. A reader who knew little about the Baha'i Faith would learn nothing from the chapter about the growth and expansion of the Baha'i community during its history. A paragraph describing the development of the Baha'i community in each historical period examined would have provided a much broader understanding of the history of the Baha'i Faith. Similarly, although some very basic global statistics about the Baha'i community are given at the beginning, and anecdotal glimpses of various Baha'i communities around the world are provided throughout, a reader who is relying on this book alone for information would come away with no clear idea about the distribution or pattern of growth of Baha'i communities around the world.

In summary, there are a good many introductory books on the market but this one can be recommended for two reasons. First, it is well-written and as reasonably comprehensive as such brief introductory books can hope to be. Second, it is up-to-date covering many of the recent changes in the Baha'i community that older similar books do not.

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