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Justice and Rights

Igrave, Michael

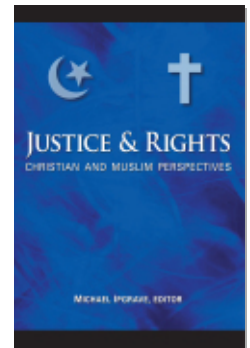
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PART III



THE MODERN WORLD

Although its roots can be traced further back in both religious and secular thinking, it is in the twentieth century that the discourse of human rights comes to dominate the way that justice is understood in many human societies and globally. Among the human rights generally recognized and affirmed by a growing international consensus is that of freedom of religion, and Malcolm Evans's essay provides an eloquent overview of the tensions and challenges involved in translating this general affirmation into the particular contexts of religious practice.

The four Christian and Islamic texts that follow address in different ways the relationship between religious commitment and state power, and the grounding of the language of rights in religious faith. The Barmen declaration and the writings of Imam Khomeini, both emerging in times of immense turmoil in society, propose radically disparate approaches from the faithful to issues of political governance. *Dignitatis humanae* and the two Islamic documents differ more subtly in the ways that they link the affirmation of rights for humans with the primacy of obligations to God.

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