Louis Raphaël I Sako (Chaldean Catholic Patriarch of Babylon and Head of the Chaldean Catholic Church): *What Will Middle Eastern Societies Lose if Christians Flee?* Louis Raphaël I Sako is the newly elevated Patriarch of the Chaldean Church and has a doctorate in history from the Sorbonne. In his keynote address, he demonstrates that Christianity is integral to the Middle East and played a pivotal role in Arab civilization. It comprised the majority of the population before Islam, and in the centuries after made major contributions to education, science, commerce, and pluralist societies. Today the situation is dire, and yet, according to Sako, the West does not comprehend the depth of the crisis facing Middle Eastern Christianity. Anarchy in the wake of the war in Iraq has decimated the Christian churches, that have been targeted by militant Sunni and Shia groups often armed with outside military and financial support. Over 600 churches have been attacked, and many members and clergy have been killed, kidnapped, or tortured. Less than half of Iraq's 1.2 million Christian adherents remain. A similar fate confronts the community in Syria. Unless this tide is stemmed, the Middle East will lose its heritage as a region of diverse faiths and cultures—precisely what Islamist militants want. The loss of the region's Christian presence, therefore, imperils the moderate Muslim majority and all who strive for freedom. In response, Patriarch Sako calls upon governments to guarantee security and rule of law; Muslim moderates to raise their voices against the assault against Christians; the international community to act in unison; and Christian leaders to inspire hope and courage in the faithful.

Paul Marshall (Center for Religious Freedom, Hudson Institute): *Who Persecutes Christians—and Why?* In a broad survey of the global scene, Marshall finds that persecution against Christians is massive, widespread, increasing, and underreported. In probing the patterns of this persecution, Marshall finds four principal sources: 1) communist regimes (China, Vietnam, Laos, North Korea, and Cuba); 2) South-Asian religious nationalism (India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan); 3) the Muslim-majority world; and 4) authoritarian and national security states. Marshall also examines a fifth threat to Christian freedom: Western secularism. While milder than the other categories, restrictions and hostilities in a number of countries in the West are growing and cause for alarm. Marshall offers a penetrating theological explanation that unites the disparate sources of persecution. Because Christianity denies that the state is the ultimate arbiter of human life, it challenges all attempts to impose a single authority in state and society. Thus one of the major factors in contemporary persecution of Christians is the association of Christianity with freedom and pluralism.

Todd Johnson (Center for the Study of Global Christianity): *How Many Christians Are Persecuted?* In a new and comprehensive analysis, the world’s most eminent scholar of religious demography, Todd Johnson, concludes that more than one of every five Christians in the world lives in states where they are likely to face persecution. This amounts to some 500 million
Christians. By 2020, Johnson predicts, this figure will rise to 600 million, or nearly a quarter (23.5%) of the world’s Christian population. Indeed, persecution against Christians persists in more nations (139) and affects more people than any other religious community. Some of the fastest-growing traditions in global Christianity—such as Pentecostal and Independent churches—find themselves under increasing risk of persecution.

Mariz Tadros (University of Sussex): *Where and How are Christians Persecuted?: Spotlight on Egypt and the Middle East*: Based on dozens of interviews with Christians and Muslims who have been directly involved in Egypt’s dramatic political upheavals over the past three years, Mariz Tadros provides a firsthand account of Coptic contributions to civil and religious freedom in the largest and most influential Arab country. For more than 1,000 years, the Copts have contributed to Egypt’s political thought, enriched its culture, and strengthened its economy. Copts played a pioneering role in developing indigenous secular thinking, and participated en masse in emancipatory revolutions from 1919 to the present day. However, between January 2011, with the onset of the revolutionary protests against Mubarak, and today, in the aftermath of the ouster of President Morsi, Egypt has witnessed the worst anti-Coptic backlash in modern history. At the same time, it has also experienced some of the highest levels of interreligious solidarity. Tadros marshals original qualitative and quantitative research to clarify the rising challenges Copts have faced, as well as how they are likely to shape Egypt’s future.

Donald E. Miller (Center for Religion and Civic Culture, University of Southern California): *Where the Spirit Leads: Pentecostalism and Freedom*. Distinguished scholar of religious movements Donald Miller demonstrates the energy, vitality, and entrepreneurial resourcefulness of Pentecostal and charismatic congregations. With one-quarter of the world’s Christians, this movement represents a pivotal renewal force within global Christianity, fueled by religious zeal, bold vision, adaptability to local context, and non-hierarchical organization. Miller documents the widely varied initiatives of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians in numerous communities of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. These include the provision of food and clothing for the impoverished, youth programs, high-quality schools in slums, medical clinics, blood banks, alcohol and drug rehabilitation, and mental health programs. Miller finds that those who embrace the conservative moral ethic of Pentecostalism experience upward mobility and the sense of agency that flows from that. While often facing discrimination or persecution, Pentecostals are learning how to work creatively with government officials in pressing for their right to religious freedom.

Anthony O'Mahony (Heythrop College, University of London): *The Contributions of Ancient Christian Communities to the Contemporary Middle East*. At a moment when Middle Eastern Christian communities face growing threats to their survival, particularly in Iraq and Syria, distinguished scholar of Middle Eastern Christianity, Anthony O’Mahony, analyzes the singular contributions of ancient Christian communities to the region. Based on years of first-hand research, O’Mahony argues that the world has failed to appreciate that the loss of these communities would forever change both the Middle East and Christianity. Christianity has its origins in the Middle East and remains an indigenous and integral part of the region. Its rich ecclesial context includes Latin, Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, Assyrian Church of the East, Oriental and Eastern Catholic, Anglican, and Protestant expressions. Between the eighth and eleventh centuries, about half the world’s Christians lived in the Middle East; that figure today is barely one percent. Syria remains the last bastion of Eastern Orthodoxy in the region, and its future is precarious. At the same time, O’Mahony objects to the conventional characterization of the Middle East as “the Muslim world” because doing so automatically renders ancient Christian communities alien. Ironically, the Christian population is growing in the Gulf states and Saudi Arabia, where millions of guest workers are Christians, though they are prevented from practicing their faith openly.

Duane Alexander Miller (Nazareth Evangelical Theological Seminary, Israel) and Philip Sumpter (Independent Researcher): *Between the Hammer and the Anvil: Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land*. Miller and Sumpter show that Palestinian Christians live a precarious existence, caught
between the constrictions of Israeli policies (and a poor economy) in the West Bank and rising Islamist social pressures within Palestinian society. Emigration is a crucial problem, as adaptable young people seek better economic opportunities abroad. Christian leaders and churches have responded to this challenge of sustaining the next generation by providing housing for young families and promoting economic development, often drawing upon transnational denominational support. Another strategy of survival has been the operation of quality Christian schools that appeal to Muslim youth, offering the opportunity to inculcate notions of tolerance and charity and thus leaven Palestinian society as a counterweight to militancy. Field research in the West Bank uncovered how believers navigate the fierce challenges of their dual identity as Christians and Palestinians through a two-level discourse that affirms Palestinian solidarity on the public level but in private insists that growing Islamist antagonism threatens their presence and freedom.

**Allen D. Hertzke** (Georgetown’s Religious Freedom Project and the University of Oklahoma): **Christian Contributions to the World’s Newest Nation.** South Sudan represents the unique case of a new nation born of transnational religious advocacy and now sustained by enduring Christian contributions. Hertzke documents how Christian solidarity activists and their Jewish allies championed the cause of the African peoples of southern Sudan, who were victims of slavery and a genocidal assault by the Islamist regime in Khartoum. This campaign led to a negotiated peace in 2005 and subsequent referendum for independence in 2011. The new nation is fragile, devastated by two decades of war, bereft of infrastructure, afflicted by internal tribal strife, weakened by government corruption, and beset by continued military pressure on its border with Sudan. Based on field research in South Sudan, Hertzke documents how indigenous Christian leaders and international Christian NGOs are playing a pivotal role in challenging corruption, providing education and opportunity, healing broken lives, building civil society, promoting reconciliation, and fashioning a national identity for the vulnerable people of South Sudan. If this fledgling nation prevails, it will owe its success to this remarkable Christian influence.

**Rebecca Shah** (Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, Georgetown University): **Empowering Poor Women in Asia, Africa, and Latin America:** Based on more than a thousand new interviews on three continents, economist Rebecca Shah documents the empowering role Christian faith can play in the lives of poor women in developing countries. Focusing on female converts to Christianity in India who come from “untouchable” backgrounds, Shah finds that the new faith of these women often enhances their dignity, agency, and hope for the future. She also finds that participation in small, face-to-face Christian communities gives them access to networks of support and accountability that yield significant economic and social benefits. For example, Shah demonstrates that women who participate in these faith-based networks are more likely to report cases of domestic abuse, are more able to involve community leaders in solving family problems (including domestic violence), and are more able to save money for the needs of their families, including their children’s education.

**Richard Burgess** (University of Roehampton, UK) and **Daniel McCain** (International Institute for Christian Studies, University of Jos, Nigeria): **Christianity and Freedom in Central and Northern Nigeria.** Burgess and McCain focus on the status and role of Christian communities in central and northern Nigeria in the face of violence and discrimination. In the core northern states where Shari’a law is enforced, Christians face severe restrictions on religious practice and vigilante violence. In the border region, they confront widespread destruction of church property and extensive killings at the hands of the Boko Haram insurgency. While these attacks have led some Christian youth to lash out in reprisals against Muslims, Christian leaders have undertaken creative initiatives of conflict prevention, interfaith dialogue, and peacemaking. In addition, churches remain extensively involved in ministries of assistance to widows and orphans, healthcare, development projects, skills training, and micro-enterprises. Repression and violence have generally sparked increasing political engagement by Christians, though in some contexts insecurity has led to evacuation and a diminished Christian presence.
Sara Singha (Georgetown University): *The Challenge and Leaven of Christian Communities in Pakistan*. Building on new fieldwork, religion scholar Sara Singha argues that Christians have played a vital role in the formation of Pakistan. They strongly supported the effort of Pakistan’s founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, to establish the country as a pluralistic democracy. Today Christians run orphanages, hospitals, clinics, women’s centers, and social work agencies across the nation. Their educational system is the most highly rated in the country, attracting the children of many elite Muslim families. However, over time, Pakistan’s governments have embraced exclusionary policies that undermine Jinnah’s vision and threaten the ability of Christians to contribute constructively to Pakistani society. While Christians are increasingly fearful, Singha shows that they are also increasingly active and assertive players in public life.

Chad Bauman (Butler University) and James Ponniah (Jnana Deepa Vidaypeeth University): *Growth and Challenges for Christianity in India*. In a groundbreaking study based on extensive new field research, Chad Bauman and James Ponniah provide an up-to-date account of the status and role of Christianity in the world’s largest democracy, Hindu-majority India. While only about four percent of the population, the Christian community has made contributions to Indian civil society that have been substantial and disproportionate, especially in education, healthcare, poverty amelioration, and human rights activism. However, Bauman and Ponniah show that Christianity’s appeal to low-caste and tribal peoples has provoked fear among the guardians of traditional Indian society, resulting in attempts—sometimes violent—to limit the freedom of Christians. And yet the Christian community’s growing experience of harassment and violence has not led it to withdraw from civil society. On the contrary, Bauman and Ponniah conclude that Christians have increased their investment in the people of India. They are forming partnerships not only with other minority communities experiencing oppression, including Muslims, but also with secular-minded Hindus and human rights activists.

Fenggang Yang (Center on Religion and Chinese Society, Purdue University): *The Dynamism of Chinese Christianity*. Drawing on original field research by a team of scholars, Fenggang Yang documents the deep heritage of Christianity in China and charts its status and role today. He finds that the growth of Christianity, particularly Protestantism, has been stunning, particularly in light of policies of state repression. Today at least five percent of China’s vast populous is Christian, and China may be second only to the United States in the size of its Protestant population. Christianity’s growth has moved from rural to urban areas, from marginalized to middle class professionals, and toward greater diversification and indigenization. Yang demonstrates the historic role of Christianity in promoting modern medicine, mass education, human rights, and religious freedom. He documents the proliferation of house churches, and how increasing numbers are moving aboveground. He charts the rise of Christian entrepreneurs and business networks, the conversion of exiled leaders of the 1989 democracy movement and the ongoing conversion of Chinese students, and the prominence of Christian lawyers in the defense of human rights. While Christianity remains under pressure, fragile, and fragmented, it presses for the rule of law, freedom of expression, constitutional democracy, and social welfare.

Zainal Abidin Bagir (Gadjah Mada University) and Robert Hefner (Boston University): *Christianity and Religious Freedom in the World’s Largest Muslim Nation*. An international team of Muslim and Christian scholars headed by Zainal Bagir and Robert Hefner finds that Christians in Indonesia—the world’s largest Muslim country—are making constructive political contributions despite rising threats to their freedom and security. Christians comprise nearly ten percent of Indonesia's population, and they have made crucial contributions to its culture, education, and independence struggle. However, major Christian leaders interviewed in 2013 argue that conditions for Christians have deteriorated since Suharto’s fall 15 years ago. Christians report more frequent attacks on churches and schools as well as efforts to marginalize them socially and politically. In this challenging climate, Christians continue to participate in Indonesia’s formal framework of cooperation between the government and religious institutions, but they are also pressing authorities to do more to guarantee their freedom and security.
Reg Reimer (International Partnering Associates) and Hien Vu (Institute for Global Engagement): Christianity in Vietnam: Contributions to Freedom Amidst Adversity. Though marginalized and perennially suspect in the Communist state, Christians represent growing and productive communities deeply embedded in the national cultures of Vietnam. Reimer and Vu show that Christianity contributed to Vietnam’s modernization, including the universally used writing script that enabled high literacy rates. While comprising 10 percent of the population, Christians play an outsized role in education, health, aid to the poor and vulnerable, and upholding human rights. With particular appeal to stigmatized ethnic minorities, the Christian “good news” that every person is created in God’s image and possesses great worth acts as a liberating force for oppressed peoples. Christian conversion also provides a documented economic uplift by promoting education, agency, industry, and thrift. Reimer and Vu find that social hostility against Christians is often tolerated or instigated by local governmental authorities, but that Christians are increasingly protesting to authorities, standing up for human rights, and acting as a liberalizing force in society. Christian communities, particularly Protestants, also model democracy with free and regular elections for pastors, elders, and denominational church officials.

Amaney Jamal (Princeton University) and Michael Hoffman (Princeton University): New Hope: Arab Muslim Attitudes Toward Religious Minorities. Using new and unique data from the second wave of the Arab Barometer survey, Jamal and Hoffman examine perceptions toward religious minorities in 10 Arab countries. They find that in this region—often portrayed in the media as a hotbed of religious conflict—tolerance of religious minorities is actually quite high. While considerable differences exist both within and across countries, citizens of the Arab world are, for the most part, highly supportive of political and religious rights for non-Muslims, including Christians, and believe that religious minorities should be welcome in Muslim states. Majorities of Muslims in every country included in this survey support equal political rights for non-Muslims, would be willing to have a non-Muslim as a neighbor, and believe that religious differences are not a reason to doubt a fellow citizen’s patriotism. These hopeful findings cast doubt on common claims that religion—and particularly, Islam—is an intractable source of division in the Middle East.

Historical Experts & Research Findings

Rémi Brague (Ludwig Maximilian University and the Sorbonne University, emeritus): God and Freedom: Biblical Roots of the Western Idea of Liberty. Among the world’s leading scholars of Arabic, Jewish, and Christian thought, Rémi Brague traces the roots of Western liberty back to the Bible in his keynote address. According to Brague, free institutions hardly ever developed in places that were not influenced by Jewish and Christian ideas. Outside the Judeo-Christian tradition, it has been rare for thinkers to suppose that God endowed us with a nature of our own, that freedom is part of that nature, and that it is through the exercise of freedom—and the errors that inevitably stem from freedom—that we fulfill God’s plan. According to Lord Acton, “liberty is not a means to a higher political end; it is itself the highest political end.” That statement is an echo of voices that can be heard in all the sacred books of the Western tradition, from the Torah to St. Paul’s Epistles.

Timothy Samuel Shah (Religious Freedom Project, Georgetown University): Theological and Secular Arguments for Religious Freedom in Early Christian Thought. Scholar of political thought Timothy Shah analyzes arguments for religious freedom in three early Christian thinkers: Tertullian, Lactantius, and Gelasius. Shah emphasizes that these thinkers deployed varied arguments for religious freedom: some were recognizably Christian, others were based on secular appeals to common human reason. Tertullian coined the phrase “freedom of religion” (libertas religionis) and was the first to argue that religious freedom belongs to all people as a matter of natural right. Lactantius develops Tertullian’s arguments and underscores that all religion by its nature—Christian or otherwise—must be voluntary to be authentic. Though Tertullian and Lactantius draw on Christian ideas, many of their arguments for religious freedom are secular—not
least because they were designed to persuade Christianity’s pagan persecutors. Gelasius also played a pioneering role in conceptualizing religious freedom by arguing that church and state must be free from the other’s undue interference. Though church-state separation is often assumed to be modern and secular, for Gelasius it is rooted in the biblical and Christological claim that Christ is the true and eternal “priest-king,” and, therefore, no single human institution can carry out the priestly and political functions that only Christ has the authority (and the virtue) to combine.

Robert Louis Wilken (University of Virginia, emeritus): The Christian Roots of Religious Freedom. According to eminent scholar of early Christianity Robert Wilken, the roots of religious freedom are to be found in the early church fathers, most notably two Latin apologists, Tertullian at the beginning of the third century and Lactantius at the beginning of the fourth century. Their ideas were passed on in later Christian writers and in the Western Middle Ages. Notably, in the wake of the Reformation, some Protestant thinkers mounted arguments in defense of religious freedom that drew deeply on the earlier Christian tradition, including the early Latin church fathers. The most significant were the English Baptists. Though it is often assumed that religious freedom as understood in the West was the product of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, the most original thinking on the subject was developed in the early seventeenth century by these and other Christian groups who were victims of persecution. Though it is not possible to draw a straight line from the eighteenth century back to the early Church and the Scriptures, ideas about freedom of religion as a natural right and religious conviction as a matter of the will—and hence free and not subject to coercion—have their ultimate roots in early Christian thought.

Elizabeth DePalma Digeser (University of California-Santa Barbara): Lactantius’ Doctrine of Religious Freedom and Its Influence on Constantine. Eminent historian of late antiquity Elizabeth Digeser explores how and why the prominent fourth century African scholar Lactantius proposed a policy of religious freedom to the Emperor Constantine, and how Constantine drew on Lactantius as he gradually gained sole control over the Roman empire. Drawing on the writings of the Christian apologist Tertullian, Lactantius’ political and theological treatise, The Divine Institutes, called for official tolerance toward Rome’s Christians during the Great Persecution (303-11) and argued for a policy of religious concord as a pillar of a future Christian state. Making these arguments to Constantine and his court in Trier, Rome’s northwestern imperial capital, Lactantius persuaded the emperor that religious repression was antithetical to government under Christian law. Where the emperor Diocletian’s persecution strove for religious conformity through violence, Lactantius’ contribution to Western political thought was his argument that states could achieve religious conformity only through voluntary conversion to religious truth.

Kyle Harper (University of Oklahoma): Christianity and the Roots of Human Dignity. Where do human rights come from? Historian Kyle Harper tackles this question by tracing their origin to the period of late antiquity, when Christianity for the first time became an empowered rather than minority religion. He argues that modern human rights are fundamentally Kantian—that is, they derive ultimately from the view that human beings are incomparably worthy creatures with moral ends and that they cannot be used as instruments of collective good in ways that do not acknowledge their value. In short, human rights derive from a high view of human dignity. By looking at concrete examples—slavery, sexual coercion, and poverty—Harper documents how Christianity modeled and propelled this new conception of human dignity in the late Roman era. Ultimately, Enlightenment views on human rights were erected on a bedrock of human dignity that would be inconceivable without Christianity. No Constantine, no Kant.

John Rist (Catholic University of America and the Patristic Institute Augustinianum): Augustine on Religious Freedom and Religious Coercion. Eminent philosopher and scholar of Augustine John Rist sympathetically reconstructs the influential views of St. Augustine on religious freedom and religious coercion, but also subjects them to a new internal critique that draws on Augustine’s own theological principles. First, Rist emphasizes that, as a bishop of the fifth century, Augustine believed that God expected him to facilitate the well being of human souls as much as possible,
not least in view of their ultimate destiny in heaven or hell. This belief led Augustine to support the limited use of religious coercion, particularly to compel heretics to rejoin the Catholic Church. Second, however, Rist identifies Augustinian arguments against Augustine’s attitude to religious coercion. One argument is that if it is God’s will that human beings exist in his image, one feature of such a state must be their capacity and freedom to accept or reject God’s grace. Therefore, religious coercion offends God’s will for human nature. Another objection is that Augustine (like virtually everyone else in antiquity) fails to recognize that religious coercion distorts and therefore endangers the nature and divine image of the coercer, however just his motives may be.

Ian Christopher Levy (Providence College): Tolerance and Freedom in the Age of the Inquisition. Contrary to popular perception, Levy argues that the medieval Christian West permitted a certain degree of religious non-conformity and could be considered “tolerant,” even if its particular form of toleration diverges from modern Western models. More importantly, medieval Western society was committed to the principle that all human beings—Christian and non-Christian alike—possessed a set of inviolable natural rights that could not be lawfully infringed by ecclesiastical or secular authorities. In that regard, the medieval West anticipated some modern conceptions of “human rights,” even though it grounded such rights in an eternal divine order. In fact, much of what the modern West holds dear in matters of conscience, individual liberty, and the just ordering of society is at least partly a legacy of late medieval thought.

John Witte (Center for the Study of Law and Religion, Emory University): Calvinist Contributions to Freedom in Early Modern Europe. John Witte explores how early-modern Calvinism played a critical role in the development of religious and civil freedoms in the West. In the sixteenth century, Genevan reformer John Calvin developed arresting new teachings on authority and liberty, duties and rights, and church-state relations that remained axiomatic for the hundreds of Calvinist communities that sprang up on the European continent, and in Great Britain, North America, and Africa in the next three centuries. In a series of crisis moments, major Calvinist figures emerged who modernized Calvin's original teachings and made them the basis of major legal and political reform. In France, Theodore Beza developed a Christian governmental contract theory that countenanced revolution against tyrants. In the Netherlands, Johannes Althusius developed a covenantal system of constitutional law and a detailed theory of religious and political rights. And in England, John Milton used the biblical image of each person as a prophet, priest, and king to defend the fundamental freedoms of speech, religion, and democratic rule. By 1650, Calvinists had built a religious theory of natural rights and covenantal politics that grounded the secular theories of human rights and political contracts later taught by the Enlightenment.

David Little (Harvard Divinity School, emeritus): Early Experiments in Religious Freedom in Colonial America. Eminent scholar of religion David Little compares two early American experiments in religious freedom—Rhode Island and Pennsylvania—in order to understand the differences in perspective and enduring implications of these pioneering efforts to protect religious liberty for people of diverse religious beliefs. Although American colonialists "invented modern constitutionalism and bequeathed it to the world," only a few of the colonies included the protection of religious freedom in their early constitutions. Two such colonies were Rhode Island and Pennsylvania. Their respective leaders, Roger Williams and William Penn, though sharing some similar commitments, had different outlooks and played different roles in trying to secure religious freedom. Whatever the differences, however, these colonial enterprises helped to launch the religious freedom protections that came to characterize modern constitutionalism.

Matthew J. Franck (Witherspoon Institute): Christianity and Freedom in the American Founding. In a fresh and synthetic essay, American constitutional scholar Matthew J. Franck uses metaphors drawn from the art of textile weaving to characterize the relationship between Christianity and the American founding. He argues that in the American founding, Christian elements of historic belief, diverse practice, and common moral norms formed the warp of the nation's fabric (the threads first stretched on the weaver’s loom), while the woof (the threads woven
through the warp at right angles) was a set of mostly complementary but sometimes contrasting political ideas of secular, modern, and occasionally heterodox origin. Like any metaphor, this one can strain if overused, but the central argument is that the American fabric of a free constitutional republic is created from a Christian moral warp and a secular political woof. In some places, the colors and texture of that fabric will be subtle and smooth; in others, loud and lumpy. But to privilege the secular over the Christian, or vice-versa, is to threaten the fabric’s integrity and to render it threadbare and subject to tearing.

Daniel Philpott (Georgetown’s Religious Freedom Project and the University of Notre Dame): *Christianity: A Straggler on the Road to Liberty?* Drawing on new historical analysis, political scientist Daniel Philpott challenges the conventional wisdom that Christianity was on the wrong side of history—or a latecomer at best—in the struggle for freedom in the modern West in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Some Christian leaders and groups opposed democracy, defended slavery, and worked to reinstate traditional monarchies. However, many Christian leaders and groups also challenged these anti-democratic agendas. Philpott documents the influential activism of important Christian advocates of liberal democracy who were often more politically progressive and liberal than many secular modernizers. He concludes that these Christians were innovators, not laggards, in the historical development of freedom.

Robert D. Woodberry (National University of Singapore): *Protestant Missionaries: Cultural Imperialists or Agents of Democracy?* Some contemporary scholars and activists suggest that the right of conversion is not a crucial element of religious liberty, and many criticize religious proselytism as a dangerous form of cultural imperialism. However, distinguished political scientist and historian of Protestant missions Robert Woodberry demonstrates historically and statistically that proselytizing or conversionary Protestant missionaries heavily influenced the rise and spread of stable democracy around the world. He argues that such missionaries were a crucial catalyst initiating the development and spread of religious liberty, mass education, mass printing, newspapers, voluntary organizations, and colonial reforms, thereby creating the conditions that made stable democracy more likely. Statistically, the historic prevalence of Protestant missionaries explains about half the variation in democracy in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania and removes the impact of most variables that dominate current statistical research about democracy.

Elizabeth Prodromou (Center for European Studies, Harvard University): *Orthodox Christian Contributions to Freedom.* In the face of growing religious repression and communal violence that are combining to cleanse Christians from the contemporary Middle East, distinguished political scientist and scholar of Orthodoxy Elizabeth Prodromou analyzes the formative historical contributions of Orthodox Christians of the Eastern Roman Empire to ideas about human freedom, war and peace, and legal regimes for regulating religious pluralism. Paradoxically, today’s existential threats to Orthodox Christians—who were the majority communities in the territories that once comprised the Byzantine Empire—have prompted political scientists and others to rediscover the historical geography of Eastern Christianity. In this geographical and cultural space, Orthodox ideas and practices figured prominently and continue to exercise an important influence. The present moment provides an opportunity to retrieve innovative and distinctive Orthodox ideas about individual freedom, communal rights, and justice in war, which have been largely overlooked in conventional narratives of Christianity and freedom.