



Shaking Hands with the Devil: The Intersection of Terrorism and Theology

William J. Abraham

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In the wake of 9/11 much has been written on terrorism. Some have examined the potential relation between religion and terrorism, few, if any, have studied the relation between theology and terrorism. In the latter case, the crucial issue is whether theology provides indirect or direct motivation and justification for terrorist acts. Drawing on his childhood and youth in Northern Ireland, William J. Abraham tackles the latter question head on. He argues that religious themes and practices play a pivotal indirect role in terrorism in Ireland and shows that theology plays a pivotal direct role in forms of Islamist terrorism. Hence current forms of terrorism cannot be fully understood without coming to terms with the crucial place of religion and theology in their origins and persistent existence. Beyond this he explores what ordinary people can do to respond to terrorism, what they should expect from the state by way of protection, how they can resist pious nonsense about forgiveness in respect to terrorism, and how they can face the depth of evil that terrorism represents for all of us. Written with economy and energy, this book is an eye-opener on terrorism; it is also a rigorous theological response to the moral and spiritual challenges posed by one of the great evils of our times.

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