

accentuates the colonial development of Canada and the United States, and *Colonial America* highlights current historical thought on the colonial period in the United States. Furthermore, *Iberia and the Americas* deals exclusively with the imperial powers of Spain and Portugal. One final notable difference is that *Colonial America* and *Encyclopedia of the North American Colonies* both devote individual articles to blacks as well as offer entries on slavery and related topics. In contrast, *Iberia and the Americas* discusses African people only within the context of articles on slavery, slave trade, slave rebellions, and race.

Iberia and the Americas: Culture, Politics, and History: A Multidisciplinary Encyclopedia is an informative and highly readable work that effectively illustrates a historic and modern day connection between Spain and Portugal and the Americas. It is recommended for undergraduate and public libraries.—Michelle Hendley, *Reference Librarian, State University of New York, College at Oneonta*

Introduction to the World's Major Religions. By Emily Taitz, Randall L. Nadeau, John M. Thompson, Lee W. Bailey, Zayn R. Kassam, and Steven J. Rosen. Ed. by Lee W. Bailey. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2006. 6 vols. acid free \$325 (ISBN 0-313-33634-2).

Religious practices and beliefs have continuously played pivotal roles in the political and social history of the world. Events of the last twenty years have drawn attention to how religious differences affect political, economic, and social affairs. Recognizing the value of having an awareness of religious differences to better understand world events, Greenwood Press has published this six-volume introduction to the largest world religions: Judaism, Confucianism and Taoism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. The general editor is an associate professor of philosophy and religion at Ithaca College. Each volume is written by a different scholar with experience in the academic understanding of religion.

The intent of the set is to provide an introduction to each movement that can be read without having a significant background in that religion or region of the world. Each volume is structured in a similar pattern, with chapters on history, texts and major tenets, branches, practices worldwide, rituals and holidays, and major figures. Also included is a chronology, a glossary, a bibliography listing essential books as well as Internet sites, and a complete set index in the back of each volume. The written text for each volume is around two hundred pages.

Because the purpose of the set is to provide basic and introductory material, there will be components left out that may be considered important by some scholars, but that is the nature of this type of reference item. The editors wanted a volume that could be understood by those with a high school education; consequently the information is general and at times simplistic. The requirements of uniformity between the volumes occasionally results in fragmentation of the information presented. This is particularly true with regard to

the volume on Christianity, whose history is characterized by a variety of religions and approaches, but is less of a problem in the volume on Confucianism and Taoism, for example.

Similar reference works include: *Human Rights and the World's Major Religions* (Praeger, 2005), which is a comparative five-volume set with a similar structure; and the three-volume *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Religious Practices* (Thomson Gale, 2006), which is more academic and not as comprehensive. Because of its focus on the six major religious movements, *Introduction to the World's Major Religions* will be of interest particularly to high school, public, junior college, and undergraduate libraries.—Mark L. Grover, *Latin American Studies Bibliographer, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah*

Islamic Civilization, History, Contributions, and Influence: A Compendium of Literature. By S. M. Ghazanfar. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 2006. 547p. acid free \$95 (ISBN 0-8108-5264-0).

According to the preface, the purpose of this work is “to provide a readily accessible compendium of literature on Islamic civilization, with a particular focus on . . . the literature pertaining to Islamic history, contributions to knowledge, and the influence of that reservoir once it was assimilated in medieval Europe” (vii). This work does, indeed, succeed admirably in its “modest mission.” Covering more than six hundred different books and articles, it is a wonderful, compact, and affordable annotated bibliography for anyone interested in Islamic civilization and its influence on the development of Western thought.

The book is thoughtfully organized. Annotated references to books and to articles are separated, and each section is divided into the broad topics of sciences and humanities, Islam and Western linkages, and general areas of study. Each record appears in alphabetical order by author or editor and is accorded an entry number. A complete bibliographical reference is followed by a concise description of the resource, its subject area, and its relative strengths and weaknesses. Many entries for books and longer articles also include chapter or section headings. Notations on bibliographies and their extent, notes or footnotes, and indexes are also included. For ease of citation location, the back matter of the book contains a complete, non-annotated bibliography of all resources; a topical bibliography that further divides the broad areas of inquiry (such as sciences and humanities) into smaller topical subgroups; and two indexes, one for authors, editors, and translators, and one for titles. Each of these citations is easily located by its numerical entry in the main work.

It is, however, the annotations that make this work both a unique and lively read. It is clear that Ghazanfar, an emeritus professor of economics whose areas of interest include medieval Islamic thought, has an expert's knowledge of his subject area and an intimate familiarity with the sources he has chosen to include in his bibliography. Each entry distills the essence of the resource down to its major themes and central ideas in plain, straightforward language that is absent of jargon. The frequent use of quotations and paraphrases from