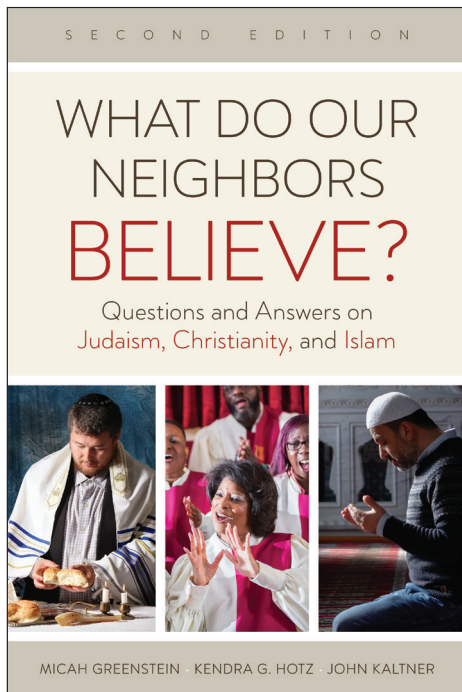


Book Club Questions for *What Do Our Neighbors Believe? Second Edition*



Were you surprised to learn that, while there are over 2 billion Christians and 1.8 billion Muslims today, there are only 14 million Jews? What factors in their respective histories account for these disparities in number?

What facts about the history of the three religions did you not know before reading this book? How does knowing that history help you better understand each as they exist today?

The authors say that, while the Bible is meant to be read, the Qur'an is meant to be recited. How does the message come across differently when you experience it with your ears more than with your eyes?

The authors tell us that leaders in all three religions deliver sermons. Why do you think this form of religious instruction and proclamation became important in each religion?

All three religions worship the one God of Abraham. How does each see God differently from the other two?

At least some Christians believe that Adam and Eve's disobedience predisposes all humans to sin. Jews and Muslims believe that humans are capable of performing acts of selfishness and evil, but that we are always free to choose the good. Given that the story is in each religion's scriptures, why do you think they draw such different conclusions?

The authors tell us that the Muslim confession of faith—"I testify that there is no God but God, and that Muhammad is God's messenger"—is quite short when compared to Christian affirmations of belief, like the Nicene Creed. Why do you think that is and what does it say about the role of belief in the two religions?

All three religions teach that the way of compassion is the life most consonant with the will of God. Why do you think, then, that members of the three religions sometimes engage in acts of religious hatred and violence?

In what ways can the common roots of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam open up possibilities for cooperation and understanding between the three religions? What aspects of these beliefs make that cooperation more difficult?

All three religions have specific teachings about religion, politics, and matters of public importance. What do you think the role of religion should be in talking about public issues? What role does religious conviction play in democratic, pluralistic societies?

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