

# Book Review

Nason-Clark, N., Fisher-Townsend, B., Holtmann, C., & McMullin, S. (2018). *Religion and intimate partner violence: Understanding the challenges and proposing solutions*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Reviewed by Veronica L. Hardy, Ph.D., LCSW  
University of North Carolina at Pembroke

*Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, Volume 15, Number 2 (2018)  
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*Religion and Intimate Partner Violence: Understanding the Challenges and Proposing Solutions* is a uniquely focused work that highlights the intersection of religious faith and abuse within family systems. The authors each have a strong collaborative history that contributes to the depth of this writing and facilitates multiple research studies on religion and abuse. A strength is that the authors gather information through both quantitative and qualitative inquiry, which provides narrative that gives voice to the participants. This allows the reader to get closer to the actual story and understand the influence behind the suggested training for religious leaders and social service professionals. The aim of the book is to provide support to spiritual leaders and service providers who engage with persons experiencing the intersectionality of religion and forms of domestic violence. Through six chapters, the experiences of the various populations, including survivors and perpetrators, are communicated; and the book closes with recommendations for a collaborative community response.

Current research pertaining to issues of domestic violence often focuses on females and this book remains consistent. This writing primarily addresses the experience of females as victims of intimate partner violence due to the frequency of incidents and help-seeking in comparison to other populations. Yet the authors do acknowledge that males experience abuse and there are occurrences in same-sex relationships. It would be interesting to explore factors contributing to the manifestation of incidents across these populations and issues that affect reporting.

Furthermore, the authors primarily reflect on the Christian tradition due to the focus of research data collected for a period of more than 25 years. In spite of this, the authors still sought to integrate elements of diversity through ethnicity, varying Christian denominations, slight references to other religious traditions, and sources of information including survivors of abuse, perpetrators, social service providers, criminal justice workers, religious leaders, and congregations. Although the reader may initially perceive this writing as strictly for religious leaders, I view it has having value in the social work classroom to enhance students' ethical responsibility of cultural awareness in relation to religion and social work practice.

As an educator, I could envision this book being used a teaching tool for an elective course focusing either on religion and social work or on domestic violence. There are several elements of this writing that would allow it to be a beneficial teaching or training tool, such as: identifying language for survivors to use when seeking help (p. 50), realizing a religious leader's possible fears when addressing this issue (p. 59), the impact of the interpretation of spiritual writings on the perpetrator (p. 65), and the roles and challenges of congregations in responding to intimate partner violence. Overall, if the reader is a university professor, religious leader, social service professional, or congregation member, this is a strong tool toward helping to develop a collaborative response to the complexity of intimate partner violence.