

Review: Liberty for All

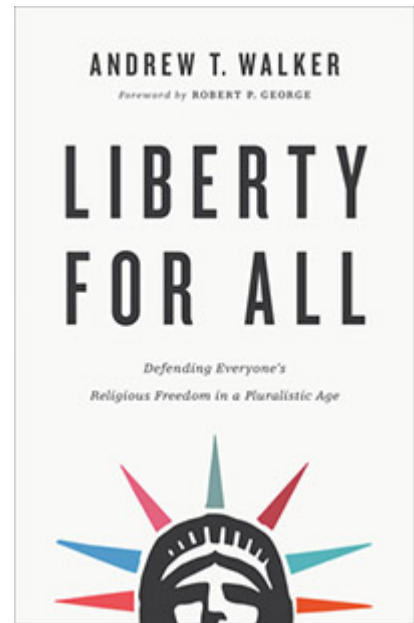
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Liberty for All: Defending Everyone's Religious Freedom in a Pluralistic Age

By Andrew T. Walker (Brazos Press)

Religious liberty for all people is more than simply a constitutional right or even a universal human right. Christian ethicist Andrew Walker asserts religious freedom has its basis in the kingdom of God, the image of God and the mission of God. In *Liberty for All*, Walker presents a comprehensive biblical and theological foundation for religious liberty—not just for those who chose to follow Jesus Christ, but also for those who reject the claims of Christianity. If Christ alone is king, all earthly allegiances to a nation or ruler are secondary. If humankind is made in God's image, humans should be able to respond freely to God's invitation—positively or negatively. And if God's redemptive mission depends upon faithful followers sharing the gospel, the freedom of proclamation and the freedom of response are imperative.

Walker presents an indisputably important thesis—religious liberty is grounded in eschatology, anthropology and missiology. Those three words provide a clue revealing the weakness of *Liberty for All*. When the main points of a book are three five-syllable words, the author has predetermined the audience. Walker’s scholarship is impeccable, but he clearly is an academic writing for other academics. The topic of religious liberty—and an insightful examination of its foundations—needs to be addressed in a way accessible to the broadest possible audience, especially given such an inclusive title.



On occasion, Walker makes his points not only cogently, but also compellingly—in winsome ways that engage readers, as well as enlighten them. Those sparkling sections make the more ponderous passages even more frustrating. They let readers know the author is capable of more than simply piling scholarly source upon source upon source.

Liberty for All addresses an unquestionably vital subject. No doubt, this book will show up on reading lists for graduate-level classes and will provide the basis for lively seminary discussions. Those are worthwhile contributions and should not be minimized. Walker’s ideas may end up helping to shape how some young ministerial students think about religious liberty. His framework for understanding the foundations of religious freedom may influence how young ministers teach and preach about the subject. It’s just a shame such a timely topic has to trickle down to the average person in the pew at some far-flung distant date.

Ken Camp, managing editor

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