Checkpoint, Temple, Church and Mosque: A Collaborative Ethnography of War and Peace (Anthropology, Culture and Society)

Jonathan Spencer, Jonathan Goodhand, Shahul Hasbullah, Bart Klem, Benedikt Korf, Kalinga Tudor Silva

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Is religion best seen as only a cause of war, or is it a source of comfort for those caught up in conflict?

Checkpoint, Temple, Church and Mosque is based on fieldwork in Sri Lanka's most religiously diverse and politically troubled region in the closing years of the civil war. It provides a series of new and provocative arguments about the promise of a religiously based civil society, and the strengths and weaknesses of religious organisations and religious leaders in conflict mediation. It argues that for people trapped in long and violent conflicts, religion plays a contradictory role, often acting as a comforting and stabilising force but also, in certain situations, acting as a source of new conflict. Additionally, war itself can lead to profound changes in religious institutions: Catholic priests engage with Buddhist monks and new Muslim leaders, while Hindu temples and Pentecostal churches offer the promise of healing.

This book will provoke new debate about the role of religious organisations and leaders in situations of extreme conflict and will be of great interest to students of anthropology, development studies, religious studies and peace/conflict studies.

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