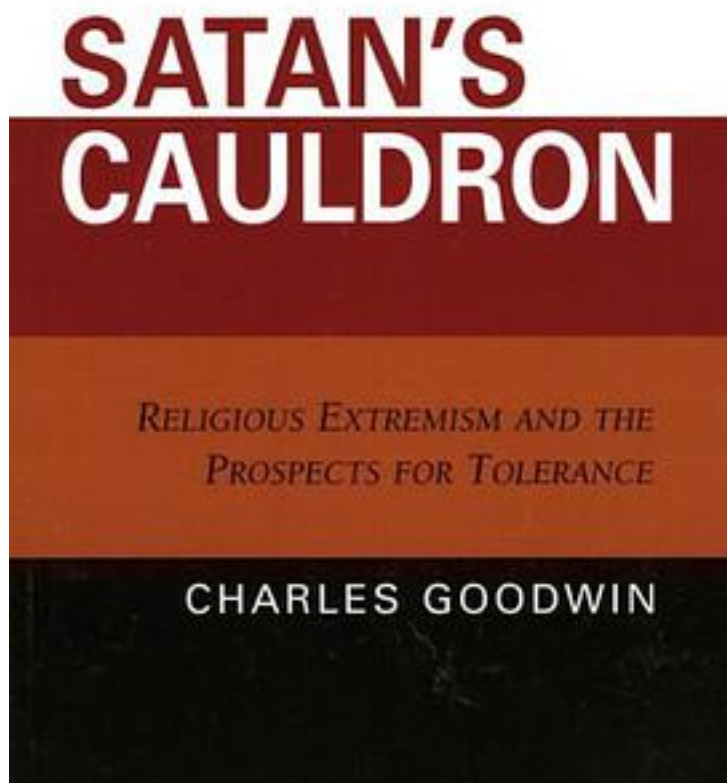


# Satan's Cauldron



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Why is it that for so many to validate their beliefs they must deny the beliefs of others? Religious extremism is driven by fear, in many cases authentic, that is initiated by the certainty of death. Death is an unknown that every faith must negotiate and overcome in order for its adherents to achieve peace of mind. Because of death's inherent insecurity, any rival concept that threatens a religion's "safe haven" can prompt dramatic reactions. It is these reactions that threaten any chance of religious tolerance and perpetuate today's increasingly polarized and contentious environment. Visceral protective emotions notwithstanding, there have been notable eras of relative religious tolerance. Two examples are the reigns of Asoka the Buddhist King of Magadha, present Northern India, from 273 to 232 B.C.E.; and Al Andalus in Muslim Spain from 750 to 100 C.E. Ecumenism and genuine inter-religious dialogue that still exist today characterized these and other periods of history. Using these historical periods as a guide, Satan's Cauldron proposes steps towards increased religious understanding today.

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