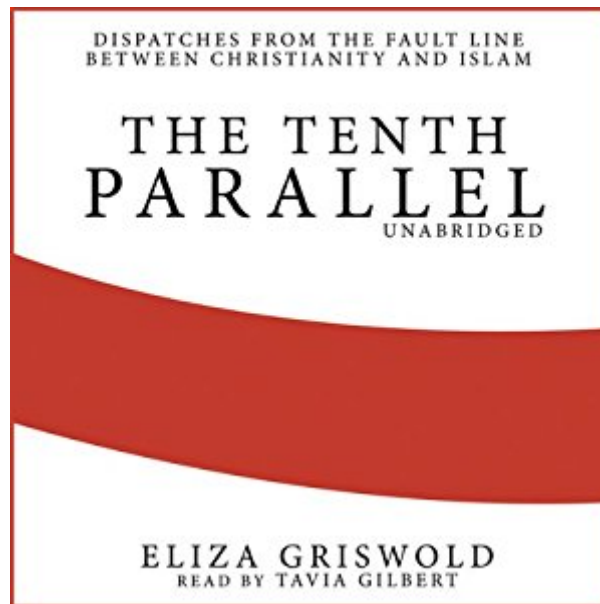


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# The Tenth Parallel: Dispatches From The Fault Line Between Christianity And Islam



## Synopsis

The tenth parallel - the line of latitude seven hundred miles north of the equator - is a geographical and ideological front line where Christianity and Islam collide. More than half of the world's 1.3 billion Muslims live along the tenth parallel; so do sixty percent of the world's 2 billion Christians. Here, in the buzzing megacities and swarming jungles of Africa and Asia, is where the two religions meet; their encounter is shaping the future of each faith, and of whole societies as well. An award-winning investigative journalist and poet, Eliza Griswold has spent the past seven years traveling between the equator and the tenth parallel: in Nigeria, the Sudan, and Somalia, and in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. The stories she tells in *The Tenth Parallel* show us that religious conflicts are also conflicts about land, water, oil, and other natural resources, and that local and tribal issues are often shaped by religious ideas. Above all, she makes clear that, for the people she writes about, one's sense of God is shaped by one's place on earth; along the tenth parallel, faith is geographic and demographic. An urgent examination of the relationship between faith and worldly power, *The Tenth Parallel* is an essential work about the conflicts over religion, nationhood and natural resources that will remake the world in the years to come.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is an on-site rendition of the 'Clash of Civilizations'. Ms Griswold goes boldly to outposts in Africa and Asia to meet radical (and rabid) Christians and Muslims. By radical I mean people who may kill because of words written in their so-called sacred texts. But the book goes beyond that, as Ms Griswold explores the why and the localities of these conflicts. She puts a historical and

geographical context in her interviews. There are different manifestations of these 'radicals' - some, like in Nigeria, seem to have exhausted hate and rhetoric and hopefully the truce established will not expire. What is also apparent with these religious extremists is their intolerance of liberal religious views in the West. Religions in the Western world receptive to Gays, pro-choice, woman's rights, general openness to sexuality ... are an apostasy to fundamentalist Christians and Muslims in the tenth parallel. There is another religion in the areas discussed by Ms. Griswold where there are no shades of grey. Sometimes we have a view of this in the U.S. when abortion clinics are bombed. But I don't know how the 'born-again' evangelicals in the U.S. would fit in or adapt to Africa or Asia. As the writer points out, religion in these countries is a way of life because there is no government infrastructure that they can rely on for social and economic support. There is among both Muslims and Christians in Africa and Asia a strong tendency to revert and restore a view of the way religion was several centuries ago - a literal view of the Quran or the Bible. So this is another clash with modernity. It is difficult to see a resolution of this religious conflict with modernity. It did seem that Muslims in Malaysia were successful at this.

In light of recent breaking news in Egypt, another major news story from neighboring Sudan has been largely gone unnoticed. A few days before the Egyptian story escalated to the continuous news-ticker, Southern Sudan voted in a referendum for independence. This quest for independence was documented in the recently released *The Tenth Parallel*, which examines the interactions of Islam and Christianity along the Tenth Parallel. Eliza Griswold spent years traveling the regions along the tenth parallel, documenting personal accounts of friction between Islam and Christianity, which seem to be most intense along that imaginary line. In *The Tenth Parallel*, Griswold explores the clashes between Islam and Christianity in Africa and Asia. She breaks her chapters down into a series of personal anecdotes which are arranged into segments based on nations. The African nations include Nigeria, Sudan and Somalia. The Asian countries are Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. Griswold carefully explores the issues at the cellular level, interviewing leaders on both sides of the conflict wherever she travels. She draws interesting parallels between Christianity and Islam, drawn directly from statements made in her interviews. Griswold is careful to create a delicate balance without taking sides. Griswold simply captures the political and religious climates in the various regions and examines the factors that benefit one religion over the other and socio-economic influences that drive much of the fighting. In addition to her brave and thorough reporting, Griswold manages to take her somewhat dry material and make it engaging. Griswold uses her incredible grasp of language to convey her subjects with enough dimension to allow the

reader to visualize her own experiences.

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