

## Book Condemning Witchcraft Banned by Brazilian Court for Prejudice

Contributed by Matthew Cullinan Hoffman  
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A judge in the state of Bahia, Brazil, has ordered the confiscation of a book written by Catholic priest Jonas Abib, in which he condemns witchcraft as immoral. The book, "Yes, Yes! No, No! Reflections on Healing and Liberation," (Sim, Sim! Não, Não! Reflexões de Cura e Libertação) warns readers against the dangers of the occult, which includes the "Afro-Brazilian" religions known as "spiritualism." According to Fr. Abib's website, the book has gone through 81 printings and has sold over 400,000 copies.

"Father Jonas, like Paul, dares to denounce works of darkness, making the reader aware of mind control, yoga, astrology, magic, and the invocation of the dead, revealing the truth about works of darkness, with which it is urgently necessary to separate," says a summary of the book posted on the same site.

Public prosecutor Almiro Sena, however, has accused Abib of "making false and prejudiced statements about the spiritualist religion as well as religions from Africa, like Umbanda and Candomblé, as well as a flagrant incitement to destruction and disrespect for their objects of worship."

He added that the violation was more serious because "the State Constitution (of Bahia) says that it is the obligation of the state to preserve and guarantee the integrity, respectability, and permanence of the values of Afro-Brazilian religion."

Ricardo Augusto Schmitt, a criminal court judge in the city of Salvador, Bahia ruled in favor of the prosecution in May, and ordered the confiscation of all copies of the book from book stores in the state.

The ruling follows other actions that have been taken against Christians in Brazil for publicly expressing their views regarding forms of behavior that are currently favored by the political establishment.

The Evangelical Protestant organization National Vision for a Christian Conscience (VINACC) was censored by a judge last year when it initiated a campaign to affirm natural heterosexual marriage and condemn homosexual behavior.

Federal Deputy Miguel Martini denounced the latest ruling on the floor of the nation's Chamber of Deputies (the lower legislative house), and expressed his concern that Brazil is beginning to censor the beliefs of Christians.

"Where is this country going?" he asked. "There is a bill under consideration in the Senate that seeks to limit the expression, on the part of Christians, of their Biblical and Evangelical convictions. And now there is a (court) decision, which clearly should be appealed. I am certain that it will be overturned, because the publisher's juridical board has already taken legal action."

The newspaper Folha da Bahia also reports that Fr. Abib will be required to appear before the court to be informed of the verdict, although there have been no reports of subsequent hearings. The publisher of the book, Canção Nova (New Song), has publicly denied the validity of the charges, and says that it was not informed of the trial.

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