Introduction

The liberal democratic tradition of political thought has long made religion an important, even central, subject of study and debate. Constructed in part as a means of avoiding the sorts of destructive religious wars that plagued post-Reformation Europe, liberalism[1] has both relied on religious ideals to buttress its claims about human freedom and equality, and treated it as a threatening force, ready to upend political peace for the demands of faith.[2] Among contemporary theorists, recourse to supportive religious doctrines has largely dissipated while the view of religion as incipient threat remains and has even intensified – and perhaps with good reason. Religion may not be alone as a cause, but the deadly conflicts in the Middle East, the former Yugoslavia, Nigeria, and the Indian subcontinent, to take a few examples, are all profoundly tied up with religion. Closer to home, the most contentious issues in American politics – abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, and so on – all have important religious connections, and liberals and politically organized religious

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[1] Throughout this work, I use the terms "liberal," "liberal democratic," and "democratic" more or less interchangeably, despite the fact that at least the first and last represent two arguably distinct traditions. I do so since in the contemporary world the traditions have largely merged in defense of a political system that is characterized by the rule of law, defense of individual liberties, representative institutions, and the like. Different theorists will obviously emphasize different elements of the tradition, but it is difficult to find a political theorist who denies the importance of protecting rights or thinks that democratic institutions are not important or salutary. Even theorists who are quite critical of the tradition nonetheless affirm many of its central attributes, though they may do so on distinctly non-liberal grounds. See, for example, John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Robert P. George, "The Concept of Public Morality," *American Journal of Jurisprudence* 45, no. 17 (2000); Robert P. George, ed., *Natural Law, Liberalism, and Morality: Contemporary Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); John Kekes, *Against Liberalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); John Kekes, *A Case for Conservatism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

[2] For an example of the former, see Jeremy Waldron, *God, Locke, and Equality: Christian Foundations in Locke's Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). He makes the case that Locke's arguments for human equality are inextricably tied to Christian theological claims. This is not to say that claims like human freedom and equality necessarily depend on religious claims, but merely that for some liberal thinkers religious

believers almost always seem to find themselves opposed to one another. As Jeff Spinner-Halev has noted, "The religious conservative haunts liberalism today."[3]

In this context liberal political theorists have coalesced around a rough consensus regarding the dangers posed by religion and their possible remedies. Liberals are, of course, often accused of falling decisively short of consensus on pretty much everything, but there is little exaggeration in saying that most liberal thinkers have concluded that constitutional democracies, especially under the kinds of wide moral and religious pluralism evident in modern societies, are made more legitimate, stable, and free when religion is largely excluded from and reshaped to be made more compatible with a just political order. This is nothing entirely new to liberalism and does not, on its own, even indicate hostility to religion per se.[4] Rather, if we think of religion as a "distinctive way of life of communities of followers shaped by their particular system of beliefs and practices that are oriented toward the supernatural,"[5] it is easy to see why liberal theorists might see it as such an especially disruptive force. The supernatural's capacity to inspire (and perhaps even direct) political action with claims of divine sanction and eternal reward and punishment, can quite plausibly be thought to uniquely disturb and destroy

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beliefs were part and parcel of their intellectual toolkit. For contemporary examples of believers making religious claims for liberal democratic government, see Daniel A. Dombrowski, *Rawls and Religion: The Case for Political Liberalism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001); Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Do Christians Have Good Reasons for Supporting Liberal Democracy?" *Modern Schoolman* 78 (2001). For quite the opposite claim, that Christianity is in particular incompatible with at least one understanding of liberal democratic government, see Robert P. Kraynak, *Christian Faith and Modern Democracy: God and Politics in the Fallen World* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001). The examples of the latter, especially in the context of American politics, are legion. See Michelle Goldberg, *Kingdom Coming: The Rise of Christian Nationalism*, 1st. edn. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006); Damon Linker, *The Theocons: Secular America under Siege*, 1st. edn. (New York: Doubleday, 2006); Kevin P. Phillips, *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century* (New York: Viking, 2006); Andrew Sullivan, *The Conservative Soul: How We Lost It, How to Get It Back*, 1st. edn. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006).

[3] Jeff Spinner-Halev, *Surviving Diversity: Religion and Democratic Citizenship* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 24.

[4] For a distinctly different view, see Stephen L. Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* (New York: Basic Books, 1993). Even Tocqueville, clearly not hostile to religion, largely fits into this consensus. This does not mean, of course, that hostility to religion plays *no* role in liberal democratic thought. Voltaire's *écrasez l'infâme!* still echoes through a great deal of contemporary thought. See Richard Rorty, "Religion as a Conversation-Stopper," in *Philosophy and Social Hope*, ed. Richard Rorty (New York: Penguin Books, 1999). But this kind of instinctive hostility is not necessary for generating the consensus's arguments.

[5] Christian Smith, ed., *The Secular Revolution: Power, Interests, and Conflict in the Secularization of American Public Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), vii.

even well-ordered societies.[6] Religion often has something to say about
the sorts of clothes we wear, the food we eat, how we work and rest and
play. It makes claims about sex, the nature of reality, and – crucially for
our purposes here – about how we are to live together, about our pol-
itics. When one group's clear assurance that God has spoken regarding
the whole society's common life looks like nonsense or heresy to another
group, it is certainly not unreasonable to think that bad things can occur,
especially in a world where it has happened (and happens) all too often.

The liberal consensus does more than merely issue jeremiads about
the dangers of religion; it offers remedies as well. These remedies appear
as a pair of strategies: (1) the construction of a public political order
independent of any direct or significant involvement on the part of
ecclesial authorities or religiously rooted normative claims; and (2) the
reconstruction or reshaping of religious faith and practice to meet the
requirements of such an order. The first is the most famous and obvi-
ous one. It stands at the very heart of liberal political thought, perhaps
best exemplified by Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration*, where he says, "I
esteem it above all things necessary to distinguish exactly the business of
civil government from that of religion, and to settle the just bounds that
lie between the one and the other."[7] Religion has the "business … [of]
the regulating of men's lives according to the rules of virtue and piety"[8]
but without the threat of force. Physical coercion (or the threat of it) lies
solely within the purview of the magistrate, who rules over "life, liberty,
health, and indolency of body; and the possession of outward things,
such as money, lands, houses, furniture, and the like."[9] This is perhaps
not quite the "naked public square,"[10] but it is a step in that direction. It
is at the very least a claim that political life has ends and purposes separ-
ate from religious life and that the latter cannot comprehensively govern
the former.[11]

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[6] See, for example, Rodney Stark, *For the Glory of God: How Monotheism Led to Reformations,
Science, Witch-Hunts, and the End of Slavery* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press,
2003). He argues that monotheism has been responsible for enormous wrongs (and
enormous progress).

[7] John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1990
[1689]), 18.

[8] Ibid., 13.   [9] Ibid., 18.

[10] The phrase is from Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square: Religion and
Democracy in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1984).

[11] Though this does not seem to require, as an empirical matter, the "high wall of separ-
ation" evidenced in some First Amendment jurisprudence, it does require that religion
and politics give each other what Alfred Stepan has called "freedom of movement." See
Alfred Stepan, "Religion, Democracy, and the 'Twin Tolerations'," *Journal of Democracy*
11, no. 4 (2000). He points out the seeming compatibility of relaxed religious establish-
ments and democratic regimes, such as the kind found in Great Britain.

The converse, that politics cannot govern religion, is not held quite so comprehensively, or at least it is not as widely and clearly acknowledged. The consensus's second strategy, that religion needs (or might need) some reshaping in order to be compatible with a liberal democratic polity, is what Nancy Rosenblum has called the argument for "congruence."[12] Again, Locke's *Letter*:

[Those] who attribute unto the faithful, religious, and orthodox, that is, in plain terms, unto themselves, any peculiar privilege or power above other mortals, in civil concernments; or who, upon pretense of religion, do challenge any manner of authority over such as are not associated with them in their ecclesiastical communion; I say these have no right to be tolerated by the magistrate; as neither those that will not own and teach the duty of tolerating all men in matters of mere religion.[13]

Stephen Macedo takes this to mean that "Liberal politics cannot leave religion to one side: it cannot altogether leave the soul alone and care only for the body, for the soul and religion need to be shaped in accordance with political imperatives."[14] Liberal democratic societies populated by people with diverse and potentially conflicting ways of life must ensure that citizens have the habits and virtues necessary to sustain such a society. Most obviously, those with theocratic ambitions have to be thwarted. Less obviously, but perhaps just as importantly, so do those whose religious views make them intolerant or "ethically servile."[15] Of course, liberals disagree a great deal on the degree to which religious traditions need to be remade. Macedo's liberal "hegemony" is to be as "gentle" as possible. Others have looked for sweeping transformations in religion, even the replacement of supernatural faiths with a "Religion of Humanity," to use Mill's phrase.[16]

Even though Mill's humanistic religion (or Dewey's common faith, for that matter) has hardly swept all before it, both strategies have been remarkably successful in their own way. Though religion continues to be a contentious part of public political life in the United States and elsewhere, the contentiousness is for the most part far removed from the religious conflicts of Europe's sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

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[12] Nancy L. Rosenblum, *Membership and Morals: The Personal Uses of Pluralism in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

[13] Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 63.

[14] Stephen Macedo, "Transformative Constitutionalism and the Case of Religion: Defending the Moderate Hegemony of Liberalism," *Political Theory* 26, no. 1 (1998): 64.

[15] The phrase is from Eamonn Callan, "Political Liberalism and Political Education," *Review of Politics* 58, no. 1 (1998). See chapter 5 for a discussion.

[16] Cf. John Stuart Mill, *Three Essays on Religion* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1998). See also John Dewey, *A Common Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991 [1934]).

Religious liberty is a cornerstone of global human rights movements and religion itself has changed, especially with respect to its political commitments. The Catholic Church, as Macedo has pointed out, officially embraced the idea of religious liberty only in the 1960s as it came to understand the benefits of having such liberty and the drawbacks of its absence.[17] If Alan Wolfe is even halfway correct in his descriptions of American religion, then liberalism has been really quite successful.[18] Whatever the inadequacies of the liberal consensus – and the rest of this work will repeatedly press on these points – its successes cannot and should not be blithely disregarded.

And yet. Despite those successes, or perhaps because of them, the consensus's philosophical, moral, and sociological underpinnings have shifted of late, and the question of religion's place in public political life and the accommodation owed to it have once again become live questions. Philosophically, we have witnessed over the past half century or so a real loss of confidence in Reason and especially in its ability to secure a universal or near-universal agreement about the nature of morality or justice (or pretty much anything else, for that matter). We need not even venture into the fever swamps of postmodern thought to see this. In his well-regarded book *Patterns of Moral Complexity*, Charles Larmore argues that we should recognize morality as "a motley of ultimate commitments" and acknowledge that "moral conflict can be ineliminable."[19] The upshot is that morality's heterogeneous status means that many of our conflicts will prove "morally irresoluble" and that the best we can do is to develop, he suggests, neo-Aristotelian practices of judgment that can help us sift through their complexities.[20] My point here is not that Larmore is necessarily right (though I think he is right enough in many respects), but just that he is emblematic of a much broader philosophical trend toward recognizing that even the full and free exercise of reasoned

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[17] See Stephen Macedo, *Diversity and Distrust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001). He rightly emphasizes the importance of the American experience and especially the work of John Courtney Murray to the embrace of religious liberty at Vatican II. It is also true, however, that sufferings of Catholics under communism were just as instructive.

[18] Alan Wolfe, *Moral Freedom: The Impossible Idea That Defines the Way We Live Now*, 1st. edn. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001); Alan Wolfe, *One Nation, after All: What Middle-Class Americans Really Think About, God, Country, Family, Racism, Welfare, Immigration, Homosexuality, Work, the Right, the Left, and Each Other* (New York: Viking, 1998); Alan Wolfe, *The Transformation of American Religion: How We Actually Live Our Faith* (New York: Free Press, 2003).

[19] Charles E. Larmore, *Patterns of Moral Complexity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), xi. As an aside, the "can" here is puzzling, since much of the rest of the book is dedicated to the proposition that moral conflict *is* ineliminable.

[20] Ibid., 145.

argument does not lead us to secure and universal agreements about the good, justice, and the like. Locke could rather confidently make "toleration to be the chief characteristical mark of the true church"[21] (an audacious statement when you reflect on the intolerance that has often marked Christianity throughout its history) in large part because he had such confidence in Reason that he was sure that not only could it provide the answers to our most pressing political questions, but that it could even compellingly tell us what to believe in matters of faith as well.[22] We lack that confidence, and with that loss has gone some portion of our capacity to say something persuasively definitive about religion and its relation to modern political life.[23]

On the flip side, moreover, religion has proven itself a vital and sometimes vitally dangerous competitor to liberal democratic government across the globe. Those whom Mark Juergensmeyer has called "religious nationalists" have explicitly denied the consensus's claims and have instead embarked on efforts to establish (or re-establish) religion as the axiological basis for political life.[24] In India, Hindu nationalists loudly proclaim that to be Indian just *is* to be Hindu, with obviously pernicious consequences for India's religious minorities. Nigeria finds its tentatively consolidated democracy buffeted by efforts to impose Islamic *sharia* law in its northern (mostly Muslim) states, and it nearly goes without saying that the radical vision behind al Qaeda and similar Islamist movements does not comport well with liberal democratic government.

In much of the developed democratic world, however, as Jean Bethke Elshtain has noted, genuine theocrats are few and far between, and the

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[21] Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 13.

[22] See John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity: As Delivered in the Scriptures* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1999 [1695]). Jürgen Habermas has, of late, done a great deal of reflection on what it might mean for philosophy to recognize that it operates within a "post-secular" and "post-metaphysical" world. See Jürgen Habermas, "A Conversation about God and the World," in *Time of Transitions*, ed. Ciaran Cronin and Max Pensky (Malden, MA: Polity, 2006); Jürgen Habermas, "On the Relations between the Secular Liberal State and Religion," in *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*, ed. Hent De Vries and Lawrence Sullivan (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006); Jürgen Habermas, "Religion in the Public Sphere," *European Journal of Philosophy* 14, no. 1 (2006). I take his claims up in chapter 3.

[23] Judd Owen has penned a thoughtful argument about the dangers that this development poses to liberalism. See J. Judd Owen, *Religion and the Demise of Liberal Rationalism: The Foundational Crisis of the Separation of Church and State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). The fact that he spends chapters attempting to combat it merely serves to prove my point.

[24] Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

likelihood of religious war seems so remote as to be nearly nonexistent.[25] Instead, what we have seen in established democracies is a resurgence of traditionalist religious movements that have eschewed the consensus's emphasis on separation without obviously falling into the theocratic or religious nationalist category. Most prominent, of course, have been conservative Protestants in the United States, whose organizing skills and enthusiasm have translated into real political influence.[26] But they are hardly alone. The Catholic bishops' sharp criticism of Catholic politicians' support of abortion rights (including, of course, the 2004 Democratic presidential nominee) is but a continuation of the bishops' earlier formal statements on nuclear weapons and economic justice in the 1980s. A recent poll showed that only 37 percent of Americans in general were "uncomfortable" with candidates discussing their religious faith, that 68 percent thought that the president ought to have a strong religious faith, and that 53 percent agreed that organized religious groups had a place in politics.[27] What's more, this is not limited to the United States; to the contrary, it truly is a global phenomenon.[28] Rather than quietly accept its

25 Jean Bethke Elshtain, "The Bright Line: Liberalism and Religion," *New Criterion* 17, no. 7 (1999). It is worth noting that Juergensmeyer's cases come almost exclusively from the developing world. There are, perhaps, two exceptions to this observation: radicalized Muslim immigrants and Christian reconstructionists. The former, perhaps more often in Europe than in the United States, are often accused of desiring to implement Islamic states under *sharia* law. For a good consideration of the place of Muslims within European politics see Joel S. Fetzer and J. Christopher Soper, *Muslims and the State in Britain, France, and Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Within the United States, the "theocratic" accusation is leveled more often at conservative Christian political organizations, and in its more serious forms accuses them of having organizational and intellectual links to self-professed theocrats such as R.J. Rushdoony and Gary North. Such claims seem only marginally persuasive and often turn policy disagreements into something much more fundamental, a mirror, ironically enough, of a significant chunk of Christian Right rhetoric. See the concluding chapter for a relatively short discussion of political Islam and the Christian Right.
26 Cf. John C. Green *et al.*, eds., *Religion and the Culture Wars: Dispatches from the Front* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996); John C. Green, Mark J. Rozell, and Clyde Wilcox, *The Christian Right in American Politics: Marching toward the Millennium* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003); John C. Green, Mark J. Rozell, and Clyde Wilcox, *Prayers in the Precincts: The Christian Right in the 1998 Elections* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2000); James L. Guth *et al.*, "American Fifty/Fifty," *First Things* 116 (2001); Mark J. Rozell and Clyde Wilcox, *God at the Grass Roots: The Christian Right in the American Elections* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997); Kenneth Wald, Silverman Adam, and Kevin Fridy, "Making Sense of Religion in Public Life," *Annual Review of Political Science* 8 (2005); Clyde Wilcox, *Onward Christian Soldiers? The Religious Right in American Politics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).
27 Fourth National Survey of Religion and Politics, Bliss Institute University of Akron, March–May 2004. Available at http://pewforum.org (accessed December 2004).
28 Cf. Paul Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa and Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Jeffrey Haynes, *Religion in Global Politics* (New York: Longman, 1998); Jeffrey Haynes, *Religion in Third World Politics* (Boulder, CO: Lynne

place in private or social life, religion has re-emerged, for good and ill, as a political force in democratic life.

Political theorists have hardly stood pat while things have changed around them. Taking account of the growing and growingly assertive cultural particularism in modern societies, scholars have warmed to arguments for multiculturalism and greater degrees of political accommodation with pluralism.[29] Consider Rawls' shift from *A Theory of Justice* to *Political Liberalism*, one clearly motivated by an acknowledgement that the claims put forth in *Theory* were "unrealistic" as they unreasonably assumed that every rational person would or could affirm justice as fairness simply on the basis of their common human reason.[30] To the contrary, modern society seems to include a fair number of "reasonable romantics," many affirming some form of religious belief, for whom justice as fairness (as laid out in *Theory*) was in principle unpalatable.[31] Rawls' conclusion was that such principled opposition meant that a society governed by justice as fairness could be open to problems of stability. No *moral* claim could be adduced to persuade the reasonable romantics that they were definitively mistaken in their rejection of comprehensive liberalism. So as with Larmore earlier, Rawls embraced the idea of irresoluble moral conflict, and – again in tandem with Larmore and others – shifted the ground of argumentation into

Rienner Publishers, 1994); Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[29] On multiculturalism and pluralism, see (among many, many others) Monique Deveaux, *Cultural Pluralism and Dilemmas of Justice* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1995); Jacob T. Levy, *The Multiculturalism of Fear* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Charles Taylor and Amy Gutmann, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); William A. Galston, *Liberal Pluralism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); William A. Galston, "Two Concepts of Liberalism," *Ethics* 105, no. 3 (1995); William A. Galston, "Value Pluralism and Liberal Political Theory," *American Political Science Review* 93, no. 4 (1999). Even Brian Barry's quite skillful polemic against multiculturalism ends up, as Jacob Levy has pointed out, conceding in the particulars that political accommodation with demands for legal exemptions on the basis of cultural and religious identity is often a good idea. See Brian M. Barry, *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Jacob T. Levy, "Liberal Jacobinism," *Ethics* 114 (2004).

[30] John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 2nd. edn. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), xix.

[31] For a pretty clear explanation of the basis for a shift to a "political" liberalism, see Charles Larmore, "Political Liberalism," *Political Theory* 18, no. 3 (1990). The phrase "reasonable romantics" is his. By it he means those people who live lives bounded in some fashion by tradition, culture, or the like, meaning that their non-political lives are illiberal in some fashion, but who are also politically liberal, or at least plausibly so. Alasdair MacIntyre or Charles Taylor would be representative here.

a *political* mode, eventually articulating a political, as opposed to his earlier comprehensive, liberalism.[32]

Though some scholars have rejected the idea, it seems clear to me that Rawlsian political liberalism is a genuine attempt to plumb the capaciousness of liberal democratic political thought, especially in regard to religious believers.[33] The introduction to *Political Liberalism* is shot through with references to religion,[34] and in restating the argument for public reason, he focuses especially on the question of religion:

How is it possible for those holding religious doctrines, some based on religious authority, for example, the Church or the Bible, to hold at the same time a reasonable political conception that supports a reasonable constitutional democratic regime? Can these doctrines still be compatible for the right reasons with a liberal political conception? To attain this compatibility, it is not sufficient that these doctrines accept a democratic government merely as a modus vivendi. Referring to citizens holding religious doctrines as citizens of faith we ask: How is it possible for citizens of faith to be wholehearted members of a democratic society who endorse society's intrinsic political ideals and values and do not simply acquiesce in the balance of political and social forces? Expressed more sharply: How is it possible – or is it – for those of faith, as well as the nonreligious (secular), to endorse a constitutional regime even when their comprehensive doctrines may not prosper under it, and indeed may decline?[35]

Though I shall argue in chapter 4 that his arguments are insufficient to tackling this conundrum, it is clear that a significant motivation for the development of political liberalism is the desire to make more room within the liberal democratic settlement for certain kinds of religious believers, especially those whose faith tends in a "totalistic" or comprehensive direction. The "desecularization of the world"[36] poses a real challenge to the liberal consensus, and whether and how liberalism meets that challenge has important consequences, both practical and theoretical.

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[32] Ibid.; John Rawls, "Justice as Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical," in *John Rawls: Collected Papers*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Rawls, *Political Liberalism*. For a wholehearted critique, see Brian M. Barry, "John Rawls and the Search for Stability," *Ethics* 105 (1995).

[33] Both Amy Gutmann and Eamonn Callan reject the idea that political liberalism is actually more capacious than comprehensive liberalism, positions that I criticize in chapters 5 and 6. See Eamonn Callan, *Creating Citizens: Political Education and Liberal Democracy* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1997); Amy Gutmann, "Civic Education and Social Diversity," *Ethics* 105 (1995).

[34] See pp. xxv–xxxi, xlv, li.

[35] John Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited," *University of Chicago Law Review* 64, no. 3 (1997): 780–81.

[36] Peter L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999).

Practically speaking, for those interested in seeing liberal democratic governments continue to spread across the globe (and stick once they get there), having a clear sense as to the possibilities and limits of religion's place in public life looks quite important. I noted earlier that those whom Juergensmeyer calls "religious nationalists" think of themselves already as viable competitors to liberal democracy. Part of the nationalists' appeal lies in the perception (perhaps quite unfair) that to embrace liberalism is to embrace a kind of atheism or agnosticism. Or, worse yet, it is to embrace a kind of Christianity, since especially in many parts of the Muslim world the separation of religion and state is seen not as the triumph of "secular humanism" (as some religious conservatives in our part of the world might have it) but as a consequence of the Christian heresy.[37] In either case, getting a clearer sense of liberalism's relation to religion ought in turn give us a better grasp on democracy's possibilities and limits.

Less explosively, but contentious nonetheless, it is clear as well that some of the most divisive political issues in the United States owe a large part of their divisiveness to their religious connections. Consider the dissenting opinions of Justices Stevens and Souter in the narrowly decided case *Zelman* v. *Simmons-Harris*.[38] The case involved a publicly funded voucher program for poor children in Cleveland, which critics charged violated the First Amendment's establishment clause because most of the participating students used those vouchers at religious schools. The court, in a 5–4 ruling written by Chief Justice Rehnquist, affirmed the program's constitutionality, largely because the parents and not the state decided where the vouchers would be spent. Justice Stevens objected to the public funding of "religious indoctrination," noting that his views had been affected by "the impact of religious strife on the decisions of our forebears to migrate to this continent, and on the decisions of neighbors in the Balkans, Northern Ireland, and the Middle East to mistrust one another. Whenever we remove a brick from the wall that was designed to separate religion and government, we increase the risk of religious strife and weaken the foundation of our democracy." Justice Souter likewise worried that the voucher program would end up stoking "religious disagreement" that could only threaten the nation's social fabric.[39] Or consider further the reaction to George W. Bush's re-election in November 2004. Garry Wills, an esteemed historian and practicing

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[37] Mark Juergensmeyer, "Holy Orders," *Harvard International Review* 25, no. 4 (2004); Mark Juergensmeyer, "The New Religious State," *Comparative Politics* 27, no. 4 (1995).

[38] 536 US 639 (2002).

[39] For a quite persuasive critique of this sort of argument, see Richard W. Garnett, *Religion, Division, and the First Amendment* (Notre Dame Law School Legal Studies Research Paper 05–23) (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Law School, 2004).