Clergy sex abuse, polygamy, children dying from faith-healing, companies that refuse to do business with same-sex couples, and residential neighborhoods forced to host homeless shelters and rehab clinics next door to children. What do these have in common? They are all examples of believers harming others and demanding religious liberty regardless of the harm. This book unmasks those responsible, explains how this new set of rights is not derived from the First Amendment, and argues for a return to common-sense religious liberty.

*God vs. the Gavel: The Perils of Extreme Religious Liberty* sets the record straight, through facts and documented stories, about the move toward extreme religious liberty in the United States. This thoroughly revised second edition features a new introduction, epilogue, and new examples and stories that revise the previous edition by more than half. All Americans need this book, before they or their friends and family are harmed by believers’ newfound capacity to break the law at will.

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GOD vs. THE GAVEL

THE PERILS OF EXTREME RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Revised Second Edition

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgments / vii
Preface to the Second Edition / ix

Introduction: The Wages of RFRA / 1

PART ONE. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IS NOT A LICENSE TO HARM OTHERS

1 The Problem / 13
2 Children / 38
3 Marriage / 84
4 Religious Land Use and Residential Neighborhoods / 115
5 Schools / 151
6 The Prisons and the Military / 180
7 The Right to Discriminate / 219

PART TWO. THE HISTORY AND DOCTRINE BEHIND COMMON-SENSE RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

8 Ordered Liberty: Religious Liberty at the Supreme Court / 239
9 The Decline of Church Autonomy and the Rise of the No-Harm Rule / 278
10 The Path to the Public Good / 314

Epilogue: Follow the Money / 347
Foreword to the 2005 Edition by Judge Edward R. Becker / 361
Notes / 363
Index / 455
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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

It's a serendipitous story, but I represented Boerne, Texas, before the Supreme Court challenging the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, or RFRA. We won in 1997, and I was led on a journey into the underside of religion, because all the groups that lobby against religion sought me out. They earnestly and generously educated me about the facts of religiously motivated illegal behavior. At first, I was just appalled. Children were dying in faith-healing homes? We don't regulate summer camps or day care centers if they are religious? Prisoners demand what in prison?! I started a file of “Religion Misbehaving,” which turned into multiple files. Then I knew that I had an obligation to share what I had learned with the public, which is why I wrote GOD VS. THE GAVEL: RELIGION AND THE RULE OF LAW a decade ago.

Ten years later, I am no longer shocked at the unacceptable behavior of too many believers, but I am even more determined that Americans learn about the dangers inherent in the religious liberty regime that was initiated in 1993 with the RFRA. The Framers called too much liberty “licentiousness.” I simply call it extreme.