Michael J. Perry addresses several related questions in human rights theory, political theory, and constitutional theory. He begins by explaining what the term "human right" means and then elaborates and defends the morality of human rights, which is the first truly global morality in human history. Perry also pursues the implications of the morality of human rights for democratic governance and for the proper role of courts – especially the U.S. Supreme Court – in protecting constitutionally entrenched human rights. The principal constitutional controversies discussed in the book are capital punishment, race-based affirmative action, same-sex marriage, physician-assisted suicide, and abortion.

Since 2003, Perry has held a Robert W. Woodruff University Chair at Emory University, where he teaches in the law school. Perry is also Senior Fellow at Emory University’s Center for the Study of Law and Religion and Co-Editor of the Journal of Law and Religion (Cambridge University Press). Perry is the author of twelve books and over eighty-five articles, essays, and book chapters.
A GLOBAL POLITICAL
MORALITY

Human Rights, Democracy, and Constitutionalism

MICHAEL J. PERRY

Emory University School of Law
For my students, colleagues, and friends in China

“Let us dedicate ourselves to what the Greeks wrote so many years ago: to ‘tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of this world.””¹

¹ Robert F. Kennedy, April 4, 1968, Indianapolis, IN; quoting Aeschylus, after informing the largely African American audience what he himself had just learned: that a little earlier that evening, in Memphis, Tennessee, Martin Luther King, Jr., had been assassinated.
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