In the Middle East persecution, torture, and the slaughter of Christians can easily be characterized as the final expulsion of Christians.
Atheist, Christopher Hitchens was inclined to blame Christianity for most of the world’s problems. Was he right?

Values and morality are have changed radically in America. The once standard assumption that it was a Christian nation is certainly no longer true.

Ann Lee, A Woman of Great Faith
A retrospective look at the Shaker movement and its religious liberty implications.

Quebec Government Seeks Dress Code
Quebec seems to be copying recent moves in France toward laicity with new proposal to ban the wearing of religious symbols.

The Body of Faith
of-faith)
Religious liberty extends beyond this life!
Author, Lauren Peterson, looks at the religious
liberty implications of the autopsy process.

America’s Founding Protestant Philosophy
(http://www.liberty-
magazine.org/article/americas-
founding-protestant-philosophy)

The public discussion of religion and religious freedom is generally dominated by two
increasingly polarized viewpoints.

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A Global Slaughter of Christians

Published in the January/February 2014 Magazine
by Kirsten Powers

As Egypt's Copts have battled the worst attacks on the Christian minority since the fourteenth century, the bad news for Christians in the region keeps coming. On Sunday, Taliban suicide bombers killed at least 85 worshippers at All Saints' Church, which has stood since 1883 in the city of Peshawar, Pakistan. Christians were also the target of Islamic fanatics in the attack on a shopping center in Nairobi, Kenya that killed more than 70 people. The Associated Press reported that the Somali Islamic militant group al-Shabab "confirmed witness accounts that gunmen separated Muslims from other people and let the Muslims go free." The captives were asked questions about Islam. If they couldn't answer, they were shot.

In Syria, Christians are under attack by Islamist rebels and fear extinction if Bashar al-Assad falls. This month rebels overran the historic Christian town of Maalula, where many of its inhabitants speak Aramaic, the language of Jesus. The Agence France-Presse reported that a resident of Maalula called her fiancé's cell phone and was told by a member of the Free Syrian Army that they had given him a chance to convert to Islam and he had refused. So they'd slit his throat.

American Christians are quite able to organize around issues that concern them. Yet religious persecution appears not to have grabbed their attention.

Nina Shea, an international human-rights lawyer and expert on religious persecution, testified in 2011 before Congress regarding the fate of Iraqi Christians, two thirds of whom have vanished from the country. They have either been murdered or fled in fear for their lives. Said Shea: "In August 2004 . . . five churches were bombed in Baghdad and Mosul. On a single day in July 2009 seven churches were bombed in . . . Baghdad. . . . The archbishop of Mosul . . . was kidnapped and killed in early 2008. . . . A bus convoy of Christian students . . . was violently assaulted. . . . Christians . . . have been raped, tortured, kidnapped, beheaded, and evicted from their homes."

Lela Gilbert is the author of Saturday People, Sunday People, which details the expulsion of 850,000 Jews who fled or were forced to leave Muslim countries in the mid-twentieth century. The title of her book comes from an Islamist slogan, "First the Saturday People, then the Sunday People," which means "first we kill the Jews, then we kill the Christians." Gilbert wrote recently that her Jewish friends and neighbors in Israel "are shocked but not entirely surprised" by the attacks on Christians in the Middle East. "They are rather puzzled, however, by what appears to be a lack of anxiety, action, or advocacy on the part of Western Christians."

As they should be. It is inexplicable. American Christians are quite able to organize around issues that concern them. Yet religious persecution appears not to have grabbed their attention, despite worldwide media coverage of the atrocities against Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East.
It’s no surprise that Jews seem to understand the gravity of the situation the best. In December 2011 Britain’s then chief rabbi, Lord Jonathan Sacks, addressed Parliament, saying, “I have followed the fate of Christians in the Middle East for years, appalled at what is happening, surprised and distressed . . . that it is not more widely known.” “It was Martin Luther King who said, ‘In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.' That is why I felt I could not be silent today.”

Yet so many Western Christians are silent. In January, Representative Frank Wolf (R-Va.) penned a letter to 300 Catholic and Protestant leaders complaining about their lack of engagement. “Can you, as a leader in the church, help?” he wrote. “Are you pained by these accounts of persecution? . . . Will you use your sphere of influence to raise the profile of this issue—be it through a sermon, writing, or media interview?” There have been far too few takers.

Wolf and Representative Anna Eshoo (D-Calif.) sponsored legislation last year to create a special envoy at the State Department to advocate for religious minorities in the Middle East and South-Central Asia. It passed in the House overwhelmingly, but died in the Senate. Imagine the difference an outcry from constituents might have made. The legislation was reintroduced in January and again passed the House easily. It now sits in the Senate. According to the office of Senator Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), the sponsor of the bill there, there is no date set for it to be taken up.

Wolf has complained loudly of the State Department’s lack of attention to religious persecution, but is anybody listening? When American leaders meet with the Saudi government, where is the public outcry demanding they confront the Saudis for fomenting hatred of Christians, Jews, and even Muslim minorities through their propagandistic tracts and textbooks? In the debate on Syria, why has the fate of Christians and other religious minorities been almost completely ignored?

In his letter challenging U.S. religious leaders Wolf quoted Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was executed for his efforts in the Nazi resistance: “Silence in the face of evil is itself evil. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.”

That pretty well sums it up.

**Author: Kirsten Powers**

Kirsten Powers is a columnist for *The Daily Beast* online. She first posted this on September 27, 2013. She is also a contributor to *USA Today* and a Fox News political analyst.
Does Religion Poison Everything?

Published in the January/February 2014 Magazine
by Clifford R. Goldstein

The headline read “Suicide Attack at Christian Church in Pakistan Kills Dozens.” Another headline read “Jews Challenge Rules to Claim Heart of Jerusalem.” Another “Gunmen Kill Dozens in Terror Attack at Kenyan Mall.”

Despite the obvious commonalities, these headlines share three more: all were in the same newspaper, on the same day, same page (New York Times, September 22, 2013, page 1. Online edition). And though Jews wanting access to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem might hardly seem in the same category as Muslim terrorists shooting up a church, it’s journalistic spreads such as this, and more, that have helped spur the publication of books such as the late Christopher Hitchens’ God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything.

How fair, though, is that charge? Does religion poison everything? Or just some things?

September 11 and Afterward

From Muslims happily blowing up themselves, and others, on an almost daily basis, to Westboro Baptist Church pastor Fred Phelps and company picketing (“Thank God for Dead Soldiers”) military funerals, to the Jewish extremists among West Bank settlers, to pedophile Catholic priests, to violent Hindu nationalists in India—and more, faith in God above can at times seem to help breed nastiness here below.

This is nothing new. A century before Christ, Roman poet Lucretius wrote: “To such heights of evil are men driven by religion.” In the 1600s French mystic Blaise Pascal famously warned that “men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction,” an inconvenient truth that’s been confirmed ad nauseam through the millennia. And before we were one percent through the new millennium, the September 11 terrorists—no doubt screaming about how great God was as they vanished into oblivion—gave those who didn’t like religion to begin with all the ammo that they needed to dislike it even more. In fact, the impetus for the so-called New Atheists was, they themselves say, September 11, which is why it’s no coincidence that many of their books (The God Delusion, God Is Not Great, The End of Faith, for example) were published after the twin towers went down.


“My respect for the Abrahamic religions went up in the smoke and choking dust of September 11,” said Richard Dawkins, the grand pooh-bah of the New Atheists. “The last vestige of respect for the taboo disappeared as I watched the ‘Day of Prayer’ in the Washington Cathedral, where people of mutually incompatible faiths united in homage to the very force that caused...
the problem in the first place: religion."

Dawkins has a point, but only to a point. No question, religion played a key role in the September 11 attacks. Atheists generally don’t, as a rule, fly jetliners filled with people into buildings or strap explosives to their bodies and walk into mosques and blow up themselves and others. Atheists and agnostics will, though, cram men, women, and children into gas chambers, or purposely starve to death entire populations. One doesn’t need religion to commit atrocities, though, no question, it helps.

The Perversion of Faith

However much the faithful are loath to admit it, religion has been and still is a source of evil. Whether this evil is a direct result of religions themselves or a human perversion of faith is a complicated question whose answer depends upon a host of other questions, the most relevant being What exactly does the religion teach?

When, for instance, members of the Russian Orthodox Church, in the name of Jesus, massacred Jews in Czarist Russia, it was hardly relevant to those Jews being tortured, raped, and murdered whether or not Jesus or Christianity as a whole condoned such horrific actions. It mattered to the name of the Russian Orthodox Church, or to Christianity, or to the vast majority of Russian Orthodox who never would have partaken in such things and who found them abhorrent. But to the Jews themselves, the victims, that was distinction without a difference, to be sure.

It’s the same with Islam, unquestionably the center of so much of the violence associated with religion today. Even if one doesn’t believe (to quote President George W. Bush) that “Islam is peace” and that Islam “is a faith based upon love, not hate,” the vast majority of Muslims aren’t involved in the violence, and large numbers certainly don’t condone it either. More Muslims are the victims of violence done in the name of Islam than are, it seems, directly involved in perpetrating that violence.

Also, despite such New Testament texts as “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3, 4) or “Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:12), history reeks with examples of how that same book has been twisted and perverted by malevolent forces. Whether prelates in Rome using the Bible to incite crusades in the Middle Ages, to nineteenth-century British industrialists citing Scripture’s promises of a better afterlife in order to justify starvation wages now, Christianity has been a fertile source for what Frenchman Michel Foucault called “regimes of truth,” the discourse used by those in power to control the masses. Also, one doesn’t have to be an expert on the Koran or Islam in order to suspect that Muslims who use their faith to justify blowing up other Muslims in mosques have distorted the writings of Muhammad.

Bad Faith

Even if one could justifiably argue that these are perversions of the faith, with thousands of sects and cults in existence it’s not unreasonable to think that some might be “bad,” in that they advocate violence and hatred as doctrine. The Charles Manson cult, for instance, committed horrific crimes in hopes of starting a race war between Whites and Blacks in the United States that would usher in Armageddon and in which Manson, the self-proclaimed reincarnation of Jesus, would reign supreme.

Unfortunately, “bad” faith doesn’t always require such aberrant and abhorrent theology. Religion, particularly the Abrahamic faiths, in which a sovereign God reigns supreme over all, can easily be exploited. When a person believes that he or she is doing God’s will—be it liberating the Holy Land from the Turks, to forcing Jews to convert, to flying jetliners into buildings—then what other choice do they have but to obey? As the New Testament says: “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29), an idea that in and of itself is fine but has proven exceedingly problematic, the biggest one perhaps being How do people know for sure what obeying God entails? This is not just subtle theology, not considering all the evil done by those certain that they were doing God’s will.

After burning down a Pequot Indian village and massacring its men, women, and children, American colonist Captain John Mason exulted: “We were like men in a dream; then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongues with singing; thus we may say that the Lord hath done great things for us among the heathen, whereof we are glad. Praise ye
the Lord!” This was, one assumes Mason believed, the same Lord who commanded that “you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord” (Leviticus 19:18).

Clearly something crucial had gotten lost along the way.

Secular Evil

Of course, humans have found plenty of reasons to exploit and kill each other, with or without evoking the name of the Lord. The idea that if, somehow, religion were eradicated humans would stop the violence and killing is wishful thinking, a fairy-tale concept not based on empirical evidence or history. The French Revolution, Stalinist Russia, Nazi Germany, Communist China, and North Korea prove that atheists are just as ready and willing to kill as their pious and praying neighbors are.

Author David Berlinski wrote that during the Holocaust an old Hasidic Jew said to an SS officer, “God is watching what you are doing” just before the SS man shot him dead. “What Hitler did not believe,” wrote Berlinski, “and what Stalin did not believe and what Mao did not believe and what the SS did not believe and what the gestapo did not believe and what the NKVD did not believe and what . . . a thousand party hacks did not believe was that God was watching what they were doing.” Berlinski continued: “As far as we can tell, very few of those carrying out the horrors of the twentieth century worried overmuch that God was watching what they were doing either.

“This is, after all, the meaning of a secular society.”

Sinful Nature

Also, however pithy, Stephen Weinberg’s quote about it taking religion to get “good people to do evil things” is wrong. “Good people” do evil for reasons that have nothing to do with faith. In To Have or Have Not, Ernest Hemingway wrote about a boy, a Cuban Communist revolutionary, who declared: “I love my poor country, and I would do anything, anything, to free it from this tyranny we have now. I do things I hate. But I would do things I hate a thousand times more.” Though the quote’s fiction, people don’t need to evoke transcendence in order to get down and dirty here. It’s a very biblical concept: human beings are sinful and will always rationalize evil. And because religion plays such a large role in many lives, it is readily available for those purposes.

Religion doesn’t poison everything; people do. Religion’s simply a handy excuse, that’s all. And, according to the book of Revelation, it will continue to be just that. The book warns about a powerful end-time conglomeration that will enforce religious worship upon the world, and that those who refuse to conform will face persecution. It reads: “He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Revelation 13:15-17). Though a veritable cottage industry has arisen seeking to interpret these texts, the principle is clear: people will continue to do evil in the name of religion. It’s human nature.

One, then, doesn’t need religious faith to do evil. Some, like Hitchens, might even argue that one does not need religious faith to do good even. But in the battle against the darker angels of our nature, religion—faith in a higher power—has the ability to lift humanity to a level of altruism that does not come naturally.

Author: Clifford R. Goldstein

Clifford Goldstein writes from Mt. Airy, Maryland. A previous editor of Liberty, he now edits Bible study lessons for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
The recent brouhaha surrounding the selection of Nina Davuluri, an American of Indian descent, as the next Miss America was another reminder of the racial divide that still exists in the United States. News networks cited the disparaging comments that were posted to Twitter about the ethnicity of the new Miss America as evidence of this rift. But while spotlighting the racism that festers in our midst, Ms. Davuluri also reminds us of the reality that America is becoming more and more diverse. While some Americans felt that the new beauty queen wasn't "American" enough, the new Miss America responded with dignity and reminded us all that she is as fully American as are any of the rest of us.

The veracity of his general commentary aside, even Bill O'Reilly lamented on the eve of the last election that the days of the "White establishment" were over in America, recognizing that we are fast becoming a nation of incredible diversity. And most in our society have come to the realization that the demographics of color and ethnicity are shifting here at home. Simply put, this isn't your grandma's America anymore.

While some in our culture seem to find the increased diversity of the American landscape lamentable, others (such as myself) see the new post-White establishment America as a step toward the fulfillment of the true American dream—a nation where all, regardless of ethnicity or color, are "created equal." But when you're used to being part of the controlling majority, conceding power to those who were once in the minority can be hard to do.

**Christian America No More**

This is becoming true of the "evangelical Christian establishment" in the United States as well. While there has officially been no established church or religion in any American state since 1833, a certain strain of Christianity has traditionally enjoyed a position of privilege and influence in American politics and culture. In part, this is because the majority of Americans have always claimed Christianity as their religion, and hence any politician who cares to win would do well to cater to the concerns and values of his or her constituency. However, regardless of the cause, over the past centuries nominal Christianity has enjoyed majority status in the United States and among its political elite.

But as the racial and ethnic demographics shift in America, so too the religious landscape seems to be changing. American Christianity has sometimes shown a superiority complex, but the reality of the current situation is beginning to set in. While the majority of Americans still claim to be Christian, there is a perception that traditional evangelical Christianity no longer enjoys the position of power and prestige that it once held in America. It is no longer a given that national leaders will be elected only if they are White, or claim Christianity as their religion. The secular left is now controlling the agenda, it seems. And for many this reality is disconcerting. And they are fighting to turn back the clock.
Biblical Christianity and Political Power

Many Christians blame the general decline of moral values in the United States on this loss of political power and influence, noting that it all began when the Supreme Court “removed” God from our public schools in the 1960s and decided some other controversial cases. Of course, no court really has the power to kick God out of any place, anywhere! In the cases decried by politically conservative religionists today, the Court merely ruled that state-sponsored prayer and religious activities were prohibited in public schools. Student-sponsored prayer meetings and Bible study groups still take place every week in public schools around America, and students are free to join these groups as they please.

However, as Christians struggle to take back power and fix what they perceive has gone wrong in American society, there’s the question of whether true Christianity was ever meant to be “in power” or in a position of popularity with the world. A cursory look at the teachings of Jesus leads to the conclusion that He never envisioned His church to be in a position in which it would dominate others in the political realm or attain popular majority on the world scene.

When the disciples were jockeying for the top position in His church, Jesus warned them that their self-seeking attitude of desiring to dominate others was contrary to the principles of His kingdom (Luke 22:25, 26). It follows that if Christ’s disciples should not seek to “lord it over” one another in the church, a place where they have legitimate jurisdiction, how much more should the church avoid misrepresenting Christ by seeking to lord it over those outside of its borders.

Jesus also prophetically warned His followers that “in the world you will have tribulation” (John 16:33, NKJV) and that “if the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first” (John 15:18, NIV). With Jesus, His lack of popularity stemmed from the fact that He fearlessly yet lovingly lived and told the truth. He further clarified the relationship that His church would have with the world by telling Pilate that “my kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight” (John 18:36, NIV). Clearly Jesus did not intend for His followers to use force or political power to set up His kingdom, or some variation of it, on this earth. Nor did He intend for them to put their ultimate hope in earthly politics.

How Should Christians Respond to Loss of Political Power?

As I hear some Christians complain about their perceived loss of political influence and power in America, I can’t help believing that becoming the underdog could be a positive thing for true Christianity. Why? Because biblical Christianity has always thrived in hostile environments (“The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”—Tertullian) and experienced some of its best days, in terms of true conversions, when it was politically powerless.

Additionally, the church is actually told in Scripture how to “fight” for Christ’s kingdom—and it’s not by seeking political power or by fighting the way the world does. The apostle Paul said, “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:3, 4, NIV). What are these weapons with which the church does battle? They include the power of prayer, the faithful preaching of the Word, and acts of love.

And yes, sometimes those acts of love may take the form of political action. But before we seek to force our religious or religiously based moral views on the rest of society, let’s think about the end goal. Do we want to win them over to our point of view or merely force them to comply? The former is an attitude of love; the latter an attitude that is foreign to Christ’s kingdom. And every political action undertaken by Christians must be done with love. A Christian that loves will never violate the conscience of another in order to convert them to their idea of religion.

The Future of the Christian Establishment in America and Beyond

What does the future hold for the “Christian establishment” in America? In fact, the Bible indicates that a form of nominal Christianity will regain the upper hand in world (and American) politics. In the apostle Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonians he speaks of the “lawless one,” a character understood to be synonymous with the antichrist power of the Apocalypse, whom he also refers to as the “son of perdition” (2 Thessalonians 2:3, NKJV). Jesus, in speaking of the traitorous disciple Judas, called him “the son of perdition,” indicating that Judas prefigured the future antichrist power predicted by Paul (John 17:12, NKJV). Of course it was Judas, one of the 12 and part of Christ’s inner circle, who ultimately betrayed Jesus to be put to death for His crime of disagreeing with the religious establishment of the time.

The Bible indicates that history will repeat itself—even here in America. A power arising from within the inner sanctum of
Christianity will assert itself to betray and persecute the people of God—a power that is Christian in name and outward appearance but devoid of the love and truth of God.

But there’s a good ending to this story. The biblical prophet Daniel tells us that the people of God, who are ultimately portrayed in Scripture as a politically powerless minority, will prevail. Christ’s kingdom of love will conquer the kingdoms of this world, the kingdoms of force and false Christianity, and set up a society in which love and righteousness will reign forever (Daniel 7:26, 27). And by the way, Christ’s kingdom will be a melting pot of different ethnicities, colors, and cultures—just like we have here in America (Revelation 5:9).

Author: Stephen Allred

Stephen N. Allred writes from Yuba City, California.
Ann Lee, A Woman of Great Faith

Published in the January/February 2014 Magazine by Boris Boyko

The meeting of Shakers started with silent meditation. Ann Lee, a young woman of medium height and serious manner, told them about her vision. She claimed that just as the male and female are seen throughout the animal and vegetable kingdoms, so had God appeared in both forms. "It is not I that speak," she said. "It is Christ who dwells in me."

Soon the whole group was taken with a mighty shaking, singing, dancing, and shouting. The Shakers believed that the second coming of Christ was near. They thought that He would appear in the form of a woman. When they heard of Ann's vision, she was no longer considered by them to be human, but divine. Ann was the one for whom they were waiting!

In 1770 she became their leader, their spiritual mother. They called her Mother Ann or Ann the Word. Ann herself never claimed that honor, nor did she think herself worthy of it. Throughout her life she was persecuted, but her faith carried her on to establish the first Shaker colony in the United States.

Ann was born in Manchester, England, on February 29, 1736, the second of eight children. Her father, John Lee, was a blacksmith from a very poor neighborhood called Toad Lane; no record exists of her mother's name.

Manchester became known as a textile center during the Industrial Revolution. New machines sped up the clothmaking. People from the countryside poured into Toad Lane, doubling the population to 20,000 between 1719 and 1739. Whole families worked for low pay from dawn till dark. They were crowded into filthy little rooms. There was much disease, and the infant death rate was high.

Ann had no schooling. During her childhood she lived amid the mud, noise, and odors of Toad Lane. Before she reached her teens, she worked in a textile factory, first as a cutter of velvet and then as a helper in preparing cotton for the looms. Later she became a cutter of hatters' fur. She was also a cook in an infirmary in Manchester. A serious-minded girl, Ann was always faithful and neat about her work.

When she observed the sin and despair in Toad Lane, Ann felt there must be a higher purpose to life. She looked for hope in religion. Cathedral square was nearby, but she thought the official church too sedate. She longed for something stronger.

At the age of 22 Ann met a tailor and his wife, James and Jane Wardley. The Wardleys had been Quakers, but couldn't find the inner peace they wanted. They also searched for a religious answer to the suffering around them.

While in London the Wardleys had joined a group called the French Prophets, also known as the Shaking Quakers, or Shakers. The French Prophets came from the mountains of southern France, where they were called Camisards. They were exiled from their homes because of their radical ideas and manner of worship.

Why did they shake and dance during worship? the Shakers were asked. The answer was that their form of worship was based on the customs of the Old Testament. When the Israelites escaped from the Egyptians at the Sea of Reeds, Miriam "took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances" (Exodus 15:20). In another passage David was seen "leaping and dancing before the Lord" (2 Samuel 6:16). The words of the psalmist said: "Let them praise his name in the dance" (Psalm 149:3).

In London the Shakers were ridiculed. They attracted only a few followers. Most of them left to go to other countries, but the Wardleys decided to start a group in Manchester. In 1758 Ann joined the Wardleys, which consisted of about a dozen members.

At first the young woman with fair complexion, blue eyes, and chestnut-brown hair did not stand out in the meetings. She was so mild-mannered and pleasant that many wondered why she had not married. Later she attracted attention when she shouted out against sin.

Ann believed that all fleshly relations between men and women were a sin. She never condemned marriage, but thought
it less perfect than celibacy. She thought that after children were produced, the life of sex must be replaced by the life of the soul.

But on January 5, 1762, Ann did marry (at her father's insistence). At that time she was still a member of the Church of England, for the banns were signed, by mark, by Ann and Abraham Standerin, or Stanley. (The cathedral records were unclear about the last name.)

Abraham was described as a kindly man who was employed as a blacksmith in Ann's father's shop. The couple made their home with her parents. In the next four years four babies were born, but each lived only a few months. In 1766, after the death of her last child, Ann became very ill. She thought that her marriage was sinful and that God was punishing her. After a time of great remorse, she had the vision that caused her to become Mother Ann.

When Mother Ann began to direct the Shakers' activities, the persecution began. In the summer of 1773 she and four others were arrested and each fined £20. Because they were unable to pay, they were thrown into jail.

Once, when she suffered from a stoning, Ann said, "I felt myself surrounded by the presence of God, and my soul was filled with joy. I knew they could not kill me, for my work was not done; therefore I felt joyful and comfortable, while my enemies felt confusion and distress."

Another time a mob dragged Ann out of a meeting. She was confined for two weeks in the "Dungeons" for breach of the Sabbath. Her cell was so small that she couldn't stand upright. It was accessible to the street, however, so James Whittaker, one of her followers, fed her wine and milk through a pipe stem he stuck in the keyhole.

One Saturday evening James reported seeing a vision. He claimed he saw a large tree in America, where every leaf seemed like a burning torch. The meaning of the vision was clear to Mother Ann. She believed that the second Shakers church would be established in America.

Immediately she sent John Hocknell, another follower, to the seaport of Liverpool to secure passage to America for a small party of Shakers. When he returned, John warned Mother Ann: "People are saying the ship, the Mariah, will sink."

Ann answered, "God will not condemn it when we are in it."

John Hocknell had saved enough money from his shop to pay expenses for the whole group. On May 10, 1774, the party of nine Shakers, consisting of Ann; her husband, Abraham; her brother William Lee; her niece Nancy Lee; Mary Partington; James Whittaker; James Shepherd; and John Hocknell and his son Richard sailed aboard the Mariah, bound for New York.

Soon after setting sail, the Shakers began to praise God by singing and dancing on deck. When the captain threatened to throw them overboard, Mother Ann told her followers it was better to listen to God than to man. While they continued to worship, a sudden storm blew up, and a loosened board caused the ship to spring a leak. The water started gaining on them, for it couldn't be pumped out quickly enough.

Ann told them to trust in God, for an angel had appeared before her with the promise of their safety. Suddenly a great wave came and closed the displaced board. Soon the pumps were stopped. After that the captain allowed the Shakers to worship freely.

On August 6, 1774, 11 weeks after leaving England, the Mariah and its passengers arrived safely in New York. The Shakers walked up Broadway until Ann led them into a side street. It was a warm Sunday afternoon, and a few people were sitting on the front steps of their house when Ann confronted them. "I am commissioned of God to preach the everlasting Gospel to America . . . , and an Angel commanded me to come to this house, and to make a home for me and my people," she said.

The Shakers were given temporary refuge until they obtained jobs. Ann stayed on to work as a housemaid, while the others scattered. Abraham took to drinking and deserted his wife. Alone in an unheated room, she became ill and unable to work.

What Mother Ann wanted most was to spread the message and to worship with her followers. One day she learned from some Quakers that it was possible to obtain cheap land about 100 miles north of the city. John Hocknell, James Whittaker, and William Lee traveled up the Hudson River to investigate.
The Shaker men took a long-term lease on some land, a low, swampy wilderness cut off from civilization, about seven miles northwest of Albany. It took them a year to clear a portion of the land and build a simple log shelter. They built a room at ground level for the "sisters" and attic space for the "brethren." Finally, in the late 1770s, Ann and her group moved to their land to start the first Shaker settlement in America.

The Indians had called the territory Niskayuna, which meant "maize land." Later it was renamed Watervliet. Mother Ann said, "Put your hands to work and your hearts to God." Slowly the Shaker settlers tamed the wilderness. They cleared trees and dug ditches to drain the fields. Some practiced their own trades, such as blacksmithing, in Albany in the winter. In a few years the colony at Niskayuna built simple but comfortable homes and barns. They raised good crops and began working on arts and crafts.

In 1779 a religious revival took place in Lebanon Valley, New York, about 30 miles from the colony. Some of the leaders visited the Shakers and joined them. They came from Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine. Some went home and formed Shaker colonies of their own.

Violent persecutions followed when Mother Ann and others embarked on missionary tours. In Petersham, Massachusetts, a crowd dragged her from her horse, threw her into a sleigh, and tore her clothes. She and some of the elders were accused of being British spies and were savagely abused. They were put into prison in Albany. Then Ann was separated from her followers and sent to Poughkeepsie, New York.

From her cell she could call out to passersby. Word was spread that a poor woman was being held because of her religion. She was then taken to a private home, where she conducted worship services. Some of the townspeople protested. They dressed like Indians and threw little bags of gunpowder through the windows and down the chimney into the fireplace.

After that, things quieted down. Five months later Mother Ann was released from prison by Governor George Clinton. She arrived, in a state of exhaustion, back at Watervliet two years and three months after having left. Eight Shaker communities had resulted from her mission in New England.

All that Mother Ann had undergone probably hastened her death, which took place on September 8, 1784, at the age of 48. Her brother William had died on July 21 of the same year. Ten years in America had taken its toll, but Ann's mission had been accomplished. Shakerism was well established in the East and later spread to Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio.

The Shaker influence peaked before the Civil War, and then their numbers lessened. There are now very few Shakers, but Ann Lee, a woman of great faith, left her mark on the religious history of the United States.

Author: Boris Boyko
The secessionist Parti Québécois (PQ), leading a minority government, is attempting to bring in a secular (laïque) program similar to that in France, barring the wearing of "ostentatious" religious symbols by government employees, employees of government-funded organizations, such as hospitals and day-care centers, and persons seeking government services.

Because the three opposition parties all disapprove of the program to one degree or another, it cannot pass, at least in its present form. However, the PQ may yield to changes put forward by the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ), a conservative party, or it may want to stand pat and use the issue to try to rally support when it calls the next election. Even if such a law eventually passes, it seems clear that the courts would find it in violation of the Canadian constitution's provision guaranteeing freedom of conscience and religion. However, there is a provision in the constitution known as the notwithstanding clause, which gives a province the power to pass an act even if the courts find it to be unconstitutional. While Premier Pauline Marois says that she will not resort to such a power, there is no guarantee that she will not change her mind.

The issue must be seen in the light of history and of city versus hinterland. While the PQ denies that Quebec is a society marked by prejudice, a 2008 opinion poll by the public opinion research organization Léger Marketing tells a different story. That survey found, for instance, that while seven percent of Canadians outside Quebec had an unfavorable attitude toward Jews, 27 percent of Quebecers did. For Muslims, the figures were 33 percent in English Canada and 49 percent in Quebec.

Prejudice is more characteristic of the hinterland than of a city such as Montreal. All mayors of Montreal and surrounding suburbs have spoken against the proposed charter. Thus, prejudice is greater where minorities are rare. In 2007 Hérouxville (population 1,340) suddenly gained national—if not international—notoriety for its code of conduct for immigrants. No stoning or burning women to death, no female genital mutilation, opposition to religious dietary requirements, no face coverings, except for Halloween, etc. There were no Muslims, Jews, or Sikhs in the community. In order to prevent other locals in the hinterland from following suit, then-Premier Jean Charest created a commission to study the matter and get public input.

The Bouchard-Taylor Commission, headed by a separatist sociologist and a Catholic philosopher, held hearings across the province and produced a report that recommended that judges, prosecuting attorneys, police, prison guards, and the president and vice president of the National Assembly should not wear religious symbols. Everyone else, they said, should be permitted to do so. Both Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor oppose the PQ charter. At this time Quebecers are sharply divided, and polling results are very sensitive to wording and sampling procedures.

An August 26 Léger survey found 65 percent saying that there are “too many accommodations” for religious groups. A SOM survey released on September 10 based on online polling found 66 percent wanting religious symbols banned for public servants. That poll also had interesting results regarding tolerance. Fifty-eight percent think that there are too many immigrants in the province, and 76 percent would be uncomfortable on a bus or train with lots of people not of Quebec origin. Yet a CROP, Inc., poll released on September 18 found 45 percent against the proposed charter, with 42 percent favorable. In that poll 81 percent wanted people to have their faces visible.

One of the Bouchard-Taylor recommendations, which has been rejected by the PQ government, is the removal of the crucifix from the National Assembly. Its presence, it has argued, is for historical and cultural reasons, not for religious reasons. That contention is simply wrongheaded. The crucifix was placed in the National Assembly by the Union Nationale government led by Maurice Duplessis, in 1936. It was part and parcel of Duplessis’ commitment to making Quebec a reactionary confessional state, in alliance with a reactionary Quebec Catholic Church. This alliance made it possible to withhold women’s right to vote till 1940. It also created the initiative for active persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses.
When Archbishop Joseph Charbonneau sided with striking miners in Asbestos, Quebec, Duplessis had the Catholic Church reassign him to pastoral work in a British Columbia nursing home. Duplessis used health transfer payments from the federal government to fund church-run institutions for abandoned children and others who were wards of the state. In these facilities children were falsely labeled mentally ill or mentally defective in order to get the funds. They were denied education and were mistreated and neglected. That, in a nutshell, is the historical meaning of the crucifix in the National Assembly.

Turning to the PQ dress code, it clashes with the government's concern for protection of the French language and for women's rights. Muslim Middle Eastern countries are a major source of French-speaking immigration. Yet it is this population group that is adversely affected. And as for women's rights, the charter will drive Muslims out of the public sphere, leaving them cloistered at home.

Some Quebecers react to the hijab (a head scarf) and much rarer niqab (head and face) as reminders of old-fashioned nuns’ habits, which they identify with the Duplessis-church alliance. Others argue, as do many Muslims as well, that the Koran does not require such coverings. However, freedom of religion is not freedom for a religion. It is a freedom for individuals to act as they see fit in accord with their religious beliefs. Others argue that men impose the requirements, but it is clear that many of those wearing the garments choose to do so.

The proposed charter would also require people seeking services to follow the same dress code. Could a hijab-wearing woman apply for social assistance or legal aid? What would happen when a turban-wearing Sikh man presented himself at the hospital emergency department with a broken foot?

The charter would exempt small religious objects, but how small is small? We have the makings of a major controversy on that aspect of the charter alone. But how can we justify permitting small religious objects? If the need is to prevent public servants from influencing the people served, surely a small cross is as meaningful as a large one. And while Christians are not compelled to wear religious items, many Jews, Muslims, and Sikhs feel so compelled.

The issue has been extremely divisive both in the wider community and even in separatist circles. A number of prominent secessionists have come out in opposition to this legislation. We do not know the long-term outcome of this campaign, but the debate is already having nasty consequences. Premier Pauline Marois argues that the charter will promote unity around shared values, but at this point it has only stirred up conflict and bigotry. Someone has poured pig’s blood on a mosque, and hijab-wearing women are being harassed on the street.

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The Body of Faith

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by Lauren Peterson

I sat down across a table from the Shi’a Muslim imam as he offered me soda before starting the interview. Realizing my tendency to stereotype, I saw that he was not at all the person I had pictured while on the phone with him just days earlier. His face was clean-shaven, and he wore a white lab coat. When he had given me the address where we were to meet, I was happy to see that it was near the research hospital where I was working that summer. I just had not realized how close his location actually was. The imam—a genetics researcher—was located just a few streets away from my institution. I began asking my questions, and he graciously answered all of them.

My research project that summer was to investigate various religious stances on the autopsy. It is a sobering topic. Specifically, I conducted research from a pediatric oncology laboratory, and so my work was directly about the autopsy of children who had died from cancer.

I interviewed religious authority figures within Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, and, as I mentioned, Islam. I also spoke with parents who faced the question of whether or not they would allow an autopsy conducted on their deceased child. One might wonder why the institution I worked for wanted me to conduct this research. In order to study certain types of cancer in hopes of finding treatments, research facilities need samples: autopsies provide samples of the metastasized cancer cells. Autopsies, however, are in a major decline, and institutions want to know why. One major reason, they believe, might be religious objection.

The literature I found on the subject seemed straightforward. One article even had a neat table with major religions listed down one column and, in the next column, whether or not they allow autopsies. Feeling dismayed that the research had already been conducted, I kept searching and found that these religious views could never fit neatly into a table.

The first major religion I researched was Buddhism. Within Buddhism a deceased person should be left “undisturbed until three days after death” so that the soul may make its transition to the next life.\(^1\) If a Buddhist religious teacher determines that the soul has left the body, an autopsy may be allowed.\(^2\) The problem with these tidy doctrines is that they are not necessarily doctrines. In a religion that has existed for more than 2,500 years in dozens of countries, “no one tradition [has] clear doctrinal authority over the others,”\(^3\) which makes teachings within Buddhism general guidelines rather than universal doctrines.

The ensuing “constellation of practices and ideas related to medicine and the body”\(^4\) became clearer when I interviewed a Buddhist cleric. When I asked him about the three-day waiting period for the soul, he said that within his school of Jōdo Shinshū within the Mahayana branch of Buddhism, after a person has died, most followers do not believe in a “strict mind-body dualism,” but rather view the corpse as “simply the remains.” This surprising information made me heavily question categorization regarding Buddhism.

My questioning continued upon finding the Hindu attitudes toward the autopsy. I had sources explaining that autopsies are “disturbing to the still-aware soul,” and therefore an autopsy should not be performed unless the law requires it.\(^5\) Other sources explained that the “true self” is more powerful than anything medicine can throw its way; it cannot be “pierced, cut, or agitated.”\(^6\) Neither source revealed that opposing views within Hinduism exist.

My next venture was to research the Jewish perspective on the autopsy, which revealed a tension between two significant teachings. The first teaching relevant to my subject is called Pikuach Nefesh. Pikuach Nefesh teaches the responsibility to save a human life when at all possible. Since an autopsy to retrieve cancerous tissue may result in further research that produces new therapies, an autopsy seems in line with the teaching. However, another teaching relevant to my research is Kavod HaMet, which is a set of rules for respecting the dead. This set of rules includes burying the individual in entirety, including all organs and blood, and burying the individual as soon as one is able, both of which make an autopsy nearly impossible. Jews may weigh these two teachings—Pikuach Nefesh and Kavod HaMet—differently, resulting in opposing stances on the autopsy. How they are weighed could stem from which branch of Judaism the individual considers themselves to be a part of: Reform, Conservative, or Orthodox. Yet a myriad of other
influences could also affect which teaching is elevated for an individual, making any categorization of the Jewish attitude toward autopsies suspect.

The imam also stressed the importance of a prompt burial as he explained the Shi’a stance on autopsies. He told me the body should be buried as soon as possible. My literature research informed me beforehand that, within Islam, autopsies are rarely permissible: “Islam teaches that a dead body must be treated with the utmost respect under all circumstances. This, in part, is why autopsies are usually not allowed unless absolutely required.” The imam explained to me what “absolutely required” entailed. He spoke of legal disputes and the risk of revenge killings, explaining that finding the cause of death through an autopsy frees some of suspected malice. When it came to an autopsy’s ability to increase medical knowledge, specifically for cancer patients, he answered that this area is “in discussion.” I wondered to myself at this moment if this answer might be the most appropriate answer for anyone attempting to fill out a chart for religious views on the autopsy. The topic is in discussion.

When it came time to research Christianity’s stance on the autopsy, I immediately felt overwhelmed. As a Christian, and thus having more knowledge about Christianity, I thought, But we are so diverse. Where do I get started? Thinking back, this was a humorous reaction, as I had, before my research, swiftly placed other religions neatly into categories.

I researched views within Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism, each of which held unique histories facing the topic of autopsies.

Within the Roman Catholic Church’s history, Pope Clement VI urged for more autopsies in order to find the cause of the plague.

While the Eastern Church is not opposed to the autopsy, some branches require that the body not be dismembered.

Protestantism, like other faiths, believes in familial autonomy for the refusal or acceptance of an autopsy.

The stance within my Seventh-day Adventism, I learned from an Adventist administrator, is in line with the general Protestant stance. He told me that it is a “personal decision.” I knew, though, that with the vast differences within the Christian Church, I was oversimplifying by only dividing Christianity into its three main branches. Even within my own denomination, I thought, major items were currently under debate, as is a hallmark of most faith communities.

In an interview with an authority figure within the Church of Christ, Scientist, a denomination that normally does not seek medical intervention, I learned something surprising. He explained that an autopsy would be “perfectly acceptable.” Then, he continued, the family can find out “what the person was dealing with.” My categorizations of certain faiths, now within Christianity, were falling apart.

While knowing that oversimplifying, stereotyping, or false categorizations were all problematic within my research, I did not feel troubled until the research became personal. The trouble was foreshadowed on my first day. Sitting in my supervisor’s office, I asked for a list of religions he specifically wanted me to research. We were almost done with the list when he added, “And the Seventh-day Adventists. They’re weird.” Even with my efforts to hide my reaction, my face must have given it away, for he promptly asked, “What are you?” “Adventist,” I replied. He spoke eagerly of the benefits of vegetarianism and avoiding alcohol.

The literature on Adventism troubled me further. In one piece titled “Eye on Religion—Working With Seventh Day Adventists,” I read about my denomination from a respected and fairly recent medical journal. Perhaps I should have known from the start that I would question the article, since our usual hyphen and lowercase “d” were missing from the title of the church. The article addressed physicians, teaching that if one’s patient were “emotionally troubled,” there were three main categories that the Adventist most likely fell into: they have a “rigidity of thought pattern (i.e., in matter of diet or dress, etc.),” are dealing with “duplicit,” or have “guilt for departing from church culture norms and expectations.” I felt emotionally troubled while reading, and this feeling, I believe, was not owing to one of these three items. I felt I had been placed in a strange, poorly fitting box.

Beyond a doubt, I made my own errors when discussing particular religions. During my first interview, I asked a rabbi a question about his church. “It’s a synagogue,” he responded. I think again of the imam I interviewed, and his enthusiasm to answer my questions. In a religion highly scrutinized, stereotyped, and in some areas generally misunderstood, he saw the opportunity to speak.
My research that summer handed me a significant dose of humility in my knowledge of religions. If I did not want to be placed into ill-fitting boxes—or any box, for that matter—I ought not to do that to those around me. I began to understand the importance of religious literacy in regards to religious liberty. Having a greater understanding of the intricacies within religions makes us less likely to stereotype, offend, or possibly mistreat, and this goes beyond pediatric oncology research.

2. *Ibid*.
4. *Ibid*.
5. Gordijn, et al.

**Author: Lauren Peterson**

Lauren Peterson writes from Calhoun, Georgia.
The public discussion of religion and religious freedom is generally dominated by two increasingly polarized viewpoints. The first view, largely promoted by President Obama and Democrats, values a religion-free, basically secular public square, with a certain amount of lip service paid to freedom for religious persons and groups, but a general denial of that freedom when it comes into conflict with other societal values, such as notions of equality, homosexual rights, or other public values held in high importance.

The second outlook, held by most of the Republican candidates for president in the past election, has a high regard for America’s religious heritage, believes there is an important role for religious values in politics, and views the separation of church and state as a socialist construct that is a threat to both religious freedom and the cultivation of virtues needed for a functioning democracy.

The trouble is that both sides largely overlook the actual Protestant founding heritage and philosophy upon which America’s church/state arrangement was based. The current church/state views of both the Republicans and Democrats were also represented at the founding, although they did not carry the influence they carry today. To understand today’s arguments, it can be very useful to go back and look at a description of these three competing points of view at the time America was being colonized.

Each of the three positions can be helpfully understood by examining the differing approaches each view takes to the relationships between individual, church, state, and God. To understand our possible futures, it will be helpful to revisit the past—specifically, the end of the seventeenth century when the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, the French legal act that had accorded French Protestants some level of toleration from the Catholic majority, sent legal thinkers to their libraries to prepare defenses of religious toleration. At that time these positions were ably expressed by three of the most brilliant legal and theological minds of that time.

The three were Samuel Pufendorf, a Lutheran natural rights lawyer and counselor to the king of Sweden; John Locke, political philosopher whose acquaintance we have already well made; and Pierre Bayle, an influential French Huguenot theologian and philosopher. In their writings can be found the basic outlines of the Puritan, semitheocratic model that is fast becoming the favorite of some in the Republican Party; the separationist model that reflects America’s founding Protestant heritage; and the secular, liberal separationist model, so appealing to many of today’s Democratic leaders.

Pufendorf and Medieval Privileges

Born in 1632 in Saxony, Pufendorf was best known for his works on international law, especially The Law of Nature and Nations. Published in 1672, this work was widely influential on the continent, in Scotland, and in the newly formed American colonies. When the Edict of Nantes was revoked, Pufendorf took the opportunity to write what has been described as an “appendix,” which applied his natural law theory to issues of church and state. Entitled Of the Nature and Qualification of Religion in Reference to Civil Society (“Religion and Civil Society”), Pufendorf’s work was published in 1687. It set out a principled basis for what was ultimately a pragmatic, anemic toleration. It represented the magisterial Protestant continuation of the medieval view of church and state.

Pufendorf dedicated the book to the elector of Brandenburg-Prussia and used it to recommend himself for a post in the elector’s Berlin court, which he indeed received. The intended audience perhaps helped shape the work. He sets out a high view of the state and its power and a rather limited and weak basis for religious toleration. The work begins with apparently strong principles of separation between ecclesiastical and civil spheres, as well as a commitment to individual rights. But the last third of the book returns spiritual powers and oversight to the “Christian” ruler that is denied to secular rulers in the first portions of the book. To simplify his thinking in a useful way, we can diagram it. The diagram contains four basic elements: God/Truth, the church, the state, and the individual. Pufendorf’s arrangement of these elements would look like this:
Here, God and the accessibility of truth are recognized. A distinction between church and state is also accepted, but that distinction allows for a great deal of cooperation, especially when the ruler is a Christian. The importance of the individual is minimized, because of his or her need to go through the organs of church and state to obtain truth, whether spiritual or civil. It represents the world of the divine right of kings and popes, where no individual rights exist, but only privileges extended by the rulers. It is one in which church and state are distinct entities, but play a role in cooperating to civilly enforce the majority religious beliefs and practices of society. Under this system the church in theory has a superior position in society, as kings and ruler are subject to the superior spiritual authority of church. Bishops and popes at times provided legitimacy to the claims of leaders to civil authority, at times crowning them, as Pope Leo III did for Charlemagne. This relationship is shown by the capital C and lowercase s.

Pufendorf criticized the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, but not because the Huguenots had some sort of natural right claim to religious liberty. Rather, he believed that the crown, once having extended the toleration, should keep its word and not withdraw it. It was a question of honoring agreements and contracts, and the social stability protected by that practice. Pufendorf had no principled or moral argument for why the edict should have been entered into in the first place. That was a policy calculation that brought political peace against an aggressive and armed minority. In Pufendorf's model, religious liberty became a question of policy, a privilege to be extended or denied at the inclination of the ruler. His philosophical fruit fell not far from the medieval tree.

**Locke and Protestant Rights**

John Locke's church/state principles were most clearly outlined in his Letter on Toleration published in 1789. His views show the shape of the new world that Luther helped create in proposing that each person should access God through prayer and Bible study. The priesthood of all believers inverted the bottom half of Pufendorf's diagram. The belief vaulted the individual to a position above the church and the state, with direct access to God and truth. Locke's model of these four elements would look like this:

This model accepted, like the medieval model, that God exists and that certain truths can be ascertained about both the world and spiritual things. But the new, Protestant view placed the individual above church and state. Each person now had the duty and right to seek this truth from God, through both the Bible (especially about spiritual things) and through nature (especially political matters and civil morality). The church and the state existed to support and protect the rights of the individual, one as a member of the spiritual world, the other as a citizen of the temporal world. There was a separation between these two powers, since their jurisdiction is limited to their separate spheres of concern, whether spiritual or civil. It is a separation of equality and mutual respect, with each entity respecting the sovereignty of the other in its own sphere. Hence, both are represented by the capital symbols C and S.

The individual's rights against the state, in turn, derived from the duties that he or she owed to God. This is essentially the political expression of the Protestant model of the priesthood of all believers. It serves as a robust foundation for individual rights, hence the individual is shown by a capital I. This is the model that we have traced through the early-modern West and seen to be an important part of the impulse to disestablishment in colonial America.

**Bayle and Skeptical Rights**

The third writer during this period was Pierre Bayle. While ostensibly a Calvinist theologian, Bayle was actually a strongly skeptical thinker who based his view of toleration on broad epistemological skepticism. Bayle was accused by fellow Calvinist theologians of supporting atheism, and was deprived of his professorship at his Protestant university as a result. Rather than an heir of Calvin and ancestor of the New England Puritans, Bayle was more an heir of Pyrrhonius and ancestor to Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau, and eventually Franklin and Jefferson.

Bayle largely shared Pufendorf's view on the supremacy of the state over the individual. He rejected Locke's notion of a reciprocal contract between ruler and people, denied the right of rebellion, and upheld a strong duty of obedience to the ruler. But unlike Pufendorf, Bayle held a skeptical view of the world. Especially in the area of speculative truths, including religion, he affirmed a strong difference from mathematical or empirical truths. For the former, he believed one could only attain a "reputed" truth, rather than actual truth. This led Bayle to defend the notion of individual conscience.

Other thinkers of the day often spoke of the rights of conscience, but it was generally understood that they were not talking about erroneous conscience or acts against one's conscience. Bayle was one of the first to propose that rights of conscience should extend to consciences that were believed to be in error—the "erroneous conscience." Even if one
could know that someone else was in error, argued Bayle, how could one know that the other person was convinced of that error? This question was a central point of contention in the debate between Roger Williams and John Cotton over the issue of toleration and persecution.

Bayle’s strong defense of conscience, then, was based on a weak view of truth, or at least human ability to know truth. This led him to view individual judgment and conscience as important. Thus, he held a strong view of the duty of the state to tolerate religious differences. To put Bayle’s view into our diagram looks like this:

The lowercase t’s represent the individualistic conception of truth, where no universal view of truth exists, but everyone conceives his or her own truth. Church and state are still separate, but it is not a separation of mutual equality and sovereign spheres. Rather, it is a separation based on a suspicion of the truth claims made by religious people. The tolerance in this scheme is dependent on a commitment to skepticism—from the logic that if truth cannot be known, then no one can or should enforce it. The real threats to this system are those who claim knowledge of absolute truths.

Churches and people who believe in special revelation were such a threat. Therefore, religious people and their beliefs are to be kept far away from politics and the public square generally. Separation of church and state, rather than being based on a view of separate sovereignties, becomes founded on hostility to the truth claims of religious people and their views of special revelation. Religious people and their ideas are kept not only out of government, but on the fringes of the public square generally. The attitude under this view of the state towards the church was symbolically expressed by Napoleon when, in contrast to Charlemagne, he crowned himself emperor in the presence of the pope. The marginalization of the church and religion in this system is represented by a lowercase c.

Rights in this system are not quite as secure as under the Lockean view. Individual autonomy is a somewhat fragile thing when it is based merely on skepticism, rather than on individual duties to, and rights before, God. The solitary autonomy of the individual becomes fairly quickly outweighed by the interest of the group once accommodation of the individual becomes anything more than a slight inconvenience. This is seen very clearly in the skeptical/atheistic communist systems, in which respect for the individual is very quickly submerged to the common good. A similar thing happens in a democracy, we have seen, when terrorism threatens national security. Hence, the i for individual is lowercase.

Under this model there is no real reason religious claims to truth should obtain greater protection than claims to convictions in other areas. Why should religious claims have special protection beyond that received by a wide range of special interest claims, such as environmentalists or animal rights supporters or advocates of unions and labor? People feel strongly about all these issues. If it is the individual conviction only that provides the basis for rights, as this model suggests, then all these convictions should be treated equally. But ultimately, if all convictions are equally protected, none can be meaningfully protected, or democracy will ultimately become gridlocked amid a cacophony of clashing rights claims.

Three Views in American History

My discussion of the third view has moved beyond what Bayle himself would have suggested into how at least parts of modern liberalism has developed this view. All three of these views, the Pufendorfian, the Lockean, and the Baylean models, have been influential at various times in American history. A side-by-side comparison of these models, a representative advocate, the historical periods they represent, and their time of greatest influence in America, is represented in the diagram below.

The American Puritans developed a Pufendorfian-like church/state arrangement in early New England, with a civil magistrate involved in enforcing ecclesiastical rules and discipline. Thus, the earliest American colonies were founded on the theory of the medieval model on the left, with the exception of Rhode Island. Some later ones, especially New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and North Carolina, were founded basically on the Protestant theory in the center column, which also guided the formation of the national constitution. Despite Pufendorf’s enormous influence in both Scotland and the American colonies, the founders of the American republic explicitly rejected his form of church/state arrangement. At the time of the Revolution and the formation of the Constitution, Pufendorf’s model of toleration was limited to two or three New England states, and within a few years vanished from even there.

It was Locke’s formulation, mediated by Madison, Witherspoon, and other key American thinkers, of dissenting Protestantism that carried the day in the founding of the American republic. Their views of the separate roles of the two powers were the ideological victors on the topic of tolerance and religious freedom in the early Republic. It is this shift
from a medieval, paternalistic, hierarchical model to an individualistic, egalitarian, rights-based outlook that Gordon Wood so ably documents in his justly famed The Radicalism of the American Revolution. Wood broadly andconvincingly documents the change from hierarchy, patriarchy, aristocracy, and patronage to democracy, equality, republicanism and the rule of law in colonial America. This chart can perhaps shed light on one of the puzzles in Wood’s book. In his subtitle he asserts that the book shows “how a revolution transformed a monarchical society into a democratic one unlike any other that had ever existed.” While he is right about the uniqueness of American society, it seems apparent from the story in his book that the Revolution did not cause the shift from monarchical to republican ethos. Rather, the Revolution was a symptom of a shift that had already occurred in American culture and society.

Wood does an excellent job of describing that shift from monarchical to republican outlook, but offers, in my view, less than convincing arguments for the reasons or causes of the shift. He focuses on the Enlightenment, arguing that “for the revolutionary generation America became the Enlightenment fulfilled.” This raises the problem, earlier discussed, of trying to explain a movement with tremendous popular appeal by appeal to an elite affinity and state of mind. Wood is unwilling to give religious thought much, if any, credit for the paradigm shift to a republican outlook, instead crediting Enlightenment and rationalistic sources. Indeed, he views religion as a conservative force that largely resisted that shift.

But it seems that Wood is looking at only one version of religion in telling this story, that of magisterial Protestantism. This is most obviously displayed when he describes the belief in “liberty of conscience and separation of church and state” as an “Enlightenment belief” that was resisted by “many religious groups.” Indeed, there were religious groups that opposed religious liberty and the separation of church and state. But the dominant religious groups in early Republican America had taken on a dissenting Protestant perspective, which Wood seems to miss almost completely. Wood’s larger story becomes much more explicable when religion, and religious belief are given their due weight in shifting popular views along from a medieval to a protestant outlook on church, society, and the individual.

The religious support for American independence as well as religious liberty was well understood by those closer to the Revolution, such as Edmund Burke, the British parliamentarian. Burke famously explained the independent character of the American colonists by fact that “the people are Protestants, and of that kind which is the most adverse to all implicit submission of mind and opinion. . . . All Protestantism, even the most cold and passive, is a sort of dissent. But the religion most prevalent in our northern colonies is a refinement on the principle of resistance: it is the dissidence of dissent, and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion.” Burke, a strong critic of the Enlightenment-driven ideology of the French Revolution, saw very different, and much more religious and Protestant principles at work in America.

But by the late nineteenth century, the rise of uncertainty in theology, science, and philosophy undermined the American Protestant outlook, and laid the groundwork for a toleration based on skepticism. John Stuart Mill’s view of skeptical individualism increasingly became the prism through which Locke was understood. As a consequence, the twentieth century saw a wholesale move, at least in the elite centers of thought, to toleration based on epistemological uncertainty and moral relativism.

After the Civil War, the rise of Darwinism, and the growth of philosophical uncertainty, many American elite institutions, including colleges and universities, the professions, and the media began to move toward the much more skeptical view represented by Bayle. This shift did not happen overnight, and much has been written on the involved process of secularization in American history. The Protestant umbrella broadened to include an even more generic and diffuse sense of American spiritual identity.

The influence of German higher idealism, with its attendant historicism and philosophy of relativism, in the mid-to-late nineteenth and early twentieth century called into question the natural law foundations of the country. This philosophy also undercut the Protestant model of church and society that was based on these views of natural law and natural rights. New approaches to the law based on social and pragmatic concerns accompanied the gradual acceptance of legal positivism. These ideas gained ground in the early twentieth century, and especially influenced legal thought in the second half of the twentieth century.

These new ideas made progress to different degrees in differing parts of society. They made greater inroads earlier in “elite” institutions, such as colleges and universities, and in the press and media. Old paradigms continued to hold sway at more popular levels. The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s could be described as the last gasp of Protestant-style natural rights/public morality arguments at the popular level, which combined with a more modern, liberal rights perspective among its leadership, the media, and the courts.
But the cycle of ideas has continued to roll, and now a vocal segment of the American public, especially after the events of September 11, is vigorously rejecting the skepticism and relativism that have come to be associated with our current system of rights. Rather than returning to a pre-Mill, Lockean view, however, there are many who appear ready to embrace a model more like that of Pufendorf. In this post-September 11 world, significant segments of American society are simultaneously rejecting moral relativism as well as seeking for the security provided by a stronger government.

This rejection of the modern paradigm moves society from the right side of the tolerance diagram generally leftward. It does not require a conscious repudiation of the importance of the individual to move over the Locke column into the Pufendorf column. The difference between Locke and Pufendorf was not over their ostensible commitment to the individual and freedom to worship. Rather, it was that a strong view of the supremacy of the state generally negated Pufendorf's theoretically positive view of the individual.

But the point of all this for overseas observers is that a “secular” version of government that has a healthy and robust freedom of religion can exist in a highly religious community. France, with its dereligioned public square, is not the only, or most attractive, model of a “secular” government that exists. The traditional American system offers a philosophical framework that is sympathetic toward religion and claims about a Supreme Being, while offering respect and accommodation to all religious claims that respect the well-being of the state and other individuals.

In this system, while the state should not promote your religious view, you and your fellow believers should be free to do so, even within the public square, as long as you respect the rights and freedoms of others to do the same. In this sense, a fair and balanced state secularism can actually lead to a greater and more robust religiosity. And these are the points that are often overlooked in our political debates today. We are squaring off as if our founding were a contest between the New England Puritan theocrats and the French secular, skeptical philosophes. Either of these pathways can just as easily lead to a statist philosophy and a State oversight of religious matters that is equally troubling. This makes it vital that we not forget the dissenting Protestant middle way of the middle colonies of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and New York, that served as the actual model for our founding.


4. Ibid., p. xiii.


8. Ibid., pp. 282, 283.

9. Ibid., pp. 280, 281; Pierre Bayle, A Philosophical Commentary, pp. 219-233.


13. Ibid., p. 191.

15. Ibid. p. 331.


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