

Political para-theology: rethinking religion, politics and democracy

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The superseding of global bipolar politics has given rise, in Ken Jowitt's regrettably apt phrase, to a New World Disorder.¹ Classical cleavages based on state policies towards market freedom and East–West regional configurations are giving way to different bases of inter-state alliances. During this period of flux, populations throughout the developing world (including former Communist states) are rediscovering the religious dimension to group identity and statist politics. How this religious resurgence will ultimately affect the geopolitical landscape remains to be seen. For while religion may provide a common linkage between formerly antagonistic state units (such as Iran and the newly independent Asian republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States), in religiously pluralistic societies a heightened emphasis on religion as a basis of state identity is destabilising (eg Serbia, India, Nigeria).

Religious revival or resurgence in the political arena (many specialists blanch at the overused 'fundamentalism') is not merely a response to fissures along the capitalist–communist fault line. The re-emergence of 'political Islam',² as personified by the fall of the Shah of Iran, preceded that of the Berlin Wall by well over a decade. Radicalisation of the militant Hindu Bharataya Janata Party (BJP), epitomised by its incited razing of the Avodya mosque in northern India, had nothing to do with events in Moscow, or even Sarajevo. And though in 1995 there was no reoccurrence of the annual Christmas bombings by the (not coincidentally Catholic) Irish Republican Army, a spate of killings near Belfast in early 1996 serves as a timeworn reminder of ongoing religious division even within the uncontestedly 'developed' and formally democratic world.

Yet even if the parallelism of religious revivalism and communist collapse is a coincidence, it is likely that the latter will feed the former. (It is not a coincidence, of course, in the former communist states themselves. Consider the role of the Catholic Church in transitional Poland, for instance, or that of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the conflict over Bosnia-Herzegovina.) On another level, however, the two phenomena *do* share a common causality: popular and profound dissatisfaction with the ideology-that be. In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the failure was that of Marxism–Leninism; in the Middle East, and in many parts of the (former) Third World, discredit goes to nationalism. Both of these ideologies, communism and nationalism, promised wealth and equity to 'the people', the former through socialism, the latter through development. While both sets of society underwent the preconditions of their respective

transformations—revolution and decolonisation—their productive and distributional fruits were not forthcoming.

Para-theology versus sacralised politics

The debunking of utopian socialism *à la* Marx and Engels, and utopian nationalism *à la* Bodin and Herder, does not mean that utopian ideology *per se* has been rejected. Rather, the basis for utopian ideology has shifted from a material/class focus (scientific socialism) and territorial/ethnic congruence (post-colonial nationalism) to an apparently otherworldly one. However incompatible socialist and nationalist versions of utopia have proven with democracy, at least they are in line with modernism. Not so religious utopias, which reject democratic premises and earthly, historically progressive templates for realising the ideal society. Each major religion has its examples: Islam in Iran and the Maghreb³, Messianic Zionism in ‘Judea and Samaria’,⁴ millenarian movements among American and Christian sects,⁵ BJP Hindus in India, Buddhist hit squads in Sri Lanka, Aum Shinrikiyo subway poisoners in Japan...Unfortunately, the list goes on and on.

Sceptical, cynical, or simply antireligious voices may here break into the argument thus: how hypocritical are such exemplars of religion! Whether couched in terms of peace, bliss, love, justice, unity or brotherhood, religion is supposed to promote harmony among humanity, not conflict or violence. Yet the renewed intrusion of religion into the realm of politics, far from having a pacifying effect, has had quite the opposite result.

The counterargument has been made, of course, that religion *has* helped to promote democracy and can further world peace.⁶ But this claim is made in the context of the Western world and particularly for the Judeo-Christian tradition. Samuel Huntington, viewing the issue from a cross-cultural perspective, finds certain non-Western religions (Confucianism and, probably, Islam) to be incompatible with democracy.⁷ From this vantage, it seems unlikely that the global interaction between religion and politics can lead, in overall balance, to greater inter-group stability.⁸

This seeming dichotomy between religious revivalism and political stability reflects a common confusion. For it uncritically accepts as ‘religious’ discourse and behaviour which are promulgated in religion’s name. It behooves us, whether we are personally suspicious of, sympathetic to, or neutrally detached from religion to differentiate between leaders and activities which are genuinely religious and those which are not. Clerics and lay leaders who, consciously or not, use religious rationale primarily to gain or maintain power we may call ‘para-theologians’. Their activities should not be considered a form of politicised (but otherwise authentic) religion but rather as ‘para-theology’.

The paradigm of para-theology is useful because it conceptualises not only the illegitimate use of religion for political purposes but its converse: sacralised politics. Sacralised politics refers to authentically religiously, spiritually, or doctrinally motivated behaviour or activity that occurs in the political arena or spills into it. The adverbial qualifier ‘authentically’ is the litmus test separating

sacralised politics from political para-theology and refers back to the power ramifications for leaders or would-be leaders.

For those engaged in sacralised politics, the anticipated outcome in personal political power is neutral or even negative; for political para-theologians, the expected result—viewed from either the actor’s or observer’s standpoint—is positive. Sacralised politics tends to be more democratic in process and output than political para-theology, though it will not be compatible with democracy in all specific instances. Both because it is usually democratic, and is inconsistent when it is not, sacralised politics will generally be less politically efficacious than para-theology.

Even when they disagree with the specific stances taken by practitioners of sacralised politics, critics should not disingenuously lump them together with political para-theologians. It is the distinction in power implications, not the content of position, which informs the analysis.

Recognising para-theology, in contrast to sacralised politics, requires us to reexamine the nature and source of power wielded in the name of religion. Power that is derived from, or exercised for the sake of, the divine transcends that of the individual personality. More pointedly it eclipses consequences for any given leader or set of leaders. Religious institutions, as do all others, of course require a modicum of power to survive. But institutional survival is not the same as individual power. Secular, political, power redounds to individuals or groups who deem themselves to be irreplaceable decision makers for their respective communities.

A distinction analogous to that between para-theology and sacralised politics is the one between the doctrines of ‘crusade’ and ‘just war’.⁹ Both refer to justifications for the use of armed force couched in religious terms. Both emanate from a given religious tradition. Both, from the perspective of the war casualty, have similar, tragic outcomes. Yet there remains a fundamental difference between military conflict which is launched by executive theological *fiat* for territorial conquest and that which is deconstructed (often *ex-post facto*) by morally conflicted theologians. Except for strict pacifists, there are degrees of morality regarding warfare.¹⁰ Distinguishing sacralised politics from political para-theology is akin to judging between just and unjust wars: not simple, but morally as well as politically imperative.

Power exercised for authentically perceived divine purposes dispenses with the significance, and interests, of individual actors. Para-theologians do not separate themselves from the divine mission: they purport to be the funnels through which the divine acts and take challenges to their persons as affronts to God. Secular power is thus stockpiled in the guise of divine power. In sacralised politics, power is depersonalised and shared; in para-theology, politicians empower themselves with the halo of the divine. The more cozy the clerical lifestyle, the more para-theological the political behaviour.

The separationist premise

The claim that one can differentiate between authentic religious behaviour and para-theology rests on a controvertible proposition; namely, that one *can*

separate religion from politics. For sure, the conceptual dualism which long characterised the conventional study of the relationship between religion and state is, as Irving Louis Horowitz pointed out over a decade ago, inadequate.¹¹ But even if the task of dissecting—or bisecting—religion from politics is difficult, it remains important to disentangle the two definitionally.¹² One potentially fruitful direction might be the divergence between ‘private’ and ‘public’ religion or, more specifically, privatised religion versus its publically resurgent variants¹³. But, as Casanova notes, ‘Religion cannot easily be encased in a strictly private individual sphere...[There is an enduring] tension between religions’ private and public roles’.¹⁴

Persons themselves grounded in religiously-inspired political activism will deny that a meaningful politics/religion distinction can be made. Christian liberation theology, for instance, claims that political neutrality legitimates the suffering of the oppressed, the very people whom Jesus was sent to serve and save. An ‘epistemological preference for the poor’ means that true Christians cannot ignore the spiritual ramifications of earthly actions, and that the pretence of political neutrality is religiously inauthentic.¹⁵ It is in Latin America that liberation theology has had the greatest political impact, with Catholic priests and laypersons lending explicit support (again, in the name of religion) to opposition movements.

But it is in the context of Islam that the unity of mosque and state is most strongly asserted. The Koran articulates a complete way of life, Islamicist activists argue, a comprehensive mode of being that does not separate the private from the public, the individual from the community, the society from the state. Secularism is synonymous with heresy in this integrationist view. It is not sufficient that state leaders be Muslim; governments must have Islam as their *raison d’être*. Otherwise they are illegitimate and need to be overthrown.

Such a view of Muslim monism is at odds with the historical and theological reality of Islam. No less than Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism and Hinduism, real Islam has been characterised by a high degree of diversity in matters governmental as well as doctrinal. Such diversity goes well beyond the overworked division between Sunni and Shi’ite branches of the faith. In different places and in different times, the mystical tradition (Sufism) has predominated over the scholastic one (reflected in the *ulama*; this replicates the dichotomy between chassidic and rabbinic Judaism). Sufism itself has split into numerous, sometimes competing, brotherhoods.¹⁶ Some Islamic regimes have been undergirded by populism (Khomeini’s Iran), others by sultanism (the Ottoman empire). In some Muslim nations, Islam has been interpreted as a kind of socialism (as articulated in Libya’s Green Book, and by Iraq’s and Syria’s Ba’ath regimes); in others, it has been construed as rather compatible with capitalism (Saudi Arabia, Morocco, the Gulf states). In some Islamic nations preachers and mosques are sponsored and controlled by the government (*masjid hukumī*); elsewhere, their status and role is more independent (*masjid ahli*). Governments explicitly constituted in the name of Islam may be ruled by military officers (Pakistan under Zia, Sudan under Numeiri) or by emirs (Kuwait). Others whose Islamic underpinnings are more indirect include Jordan (under a king), Egypt (governed by a one-party regime) and Senegal (with a multiparty democracy).

But perhaps the most dichotomous strands are those pitting Islamic modernism, which accepts European enlightenment ideals and values, against anti-Western 'fundamentalism'. (The former is identified with the 19th century sheikh Rifa al-Tahtawi; the latter may be traced to Hasan-al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brothers.) In the name of *shura* (consultation, democracy), Islamic modernists look to liberally reformed government to allow 'greater political participation, reform through decentralisation, broader economic liberalisation, a priority upon social justice, and more pluralism and tolerance of Islamic modernists.'¹⁷ 'Fundamentalists' divide between camps which want to take over the reins of state in the name of Islam and those who believe that, by its very nature, human government is flawed. In short, the great diversity in societies which otherwise are indiscriminately thought of as Muslim precludes simple encapsulation of what Islamic politics are or ought to be.

The same can be said of virtually all other religions of wide global import. Differences between Roman Catholicism, Greek Orthodoxy, and Russian Orthodoxy (not to mention between Catholicism *tout court* and Protestantism) have betokened substantive differences in the way that questions of rulership and political fealty have been played out in their respective societies. Eastern Europe is currently evincing renewed relationships between church and nation. Within American Protestantism, and indeed the American Baptist tradition, witness the theo-political contrast between the two reverend Jesses, Falwell and Jackson. Judaism, though ostensibly emanating from a single body of law, the Torah, has had two parallel streams of talmudic interpretation flowing from it (the western, or *ashkenazi*, and eastern, or *sephardi*), a distinction which, when intertwined with distinctive ethnic, historical and cultural dimensions, continues to have an impact on domestic Israeli politics today. American Judaism has many characteristics distinguishing it from Israeli Judaism,¹⁸ not least of which is the emergence of progressively liberal non-orthodox traditions. And then there are the marginal movements on both sides of the theo-political spectrum, both ostensibly emanating from a 'correct' vision of Judaism. These are represented by such antitheses as the late Rabbi Meir Kahane's anti-democratic and quasi-racist Kach movement (a spin-off of which moulded the assassin of Prime Minister Rabin) and the liberal, humanistic, conciliatory theology of Rabbis David Hartmann and the late Yehoshua Leibowitz.

Even Buddhism—which most Westerners associate with a transcendental, unworldly, apolitical mindset—has become a catalyst for earthly violence. Anagarika Dharmapala's (1864–1933) populist, anti-Western, anti-Muslim and anti-Hindu interpretation of Theravada Buddhism in Ceylon planted poisonous seeds whose insidious offshoots largely account for Sinhala Buddhist–Tamil Hindu conflict in present-day Sri Lanka.¹⁹ Just as contradictory is the hardening of the philosophically tolerant Hindu tradition, as manifested in the BJP platform in India, which novelly equates the Hindu religion with the Indian state.

To reiterate: any religion worthy of the name allows for extremely broad, and often contradictory, interpretations of both theological doctrine and political behaviour. Unless one claims that all politics legitimated by religious rationale is 'true'—an untenable position both for the politically activist theologian, for whom the opposite theo-political stance is tantamount to heresy, as well as for

the neutral social scientist, who possesses no basis for evaluating a religion's truth value—then some yardstick distinguishing the genuinely religious from the para-theological is called for. One such gauge is the degree to which the purported theologian wishes to restructure government and so redefine the state.

Religions and constitutions

A major reason for the diversity in political ideology and institutional structure emanating from single religions is that religions are not constitutional in nature. That is, although they set forth broad principles for the conduct of persons in society, and some elaborate specific legal systems (canon law, *shari'a*, *halacha*), they do not, interestingly enough, specify how any government set up in that religion's name ought to be structured. This is not surprising for Buddhism and Hinduism, religions which have been less legalistic and text-oriented than their Western counterparts. But it is significant when one considers Jewish, Christian and Muslim states. Modern Israeli constitutional engineers cannot look to the Torah for a detailed model of the Knesset (let alone guidance as to the advisability of parliamentary over presidential modes of election); not even the Sanhedrin of the pre-modern Jewish polity is mentioned there. One reads the New Testament in vain for a blueprint of the Vatican or a procedure for papal selection; indeed, it is this constitutional vagueness which made possible not only a competing papacy in Avignon but the very emergence of a Reformation and its myriad theo-political offshoots.

It is the lack of a detailed prescription of the Muslim state in the Koran which, given Islam's putative unity of religion and politics, is most striking. Governments in the Islamic republics of Iran, Sudan and Mauritania bear only faint structural resemblance to one another. Pakistan, whose very existence is based on its being an Islamic state, is notoriously unstable, not only in terms of its leadership but in its very mode of governance: its Islamic essence, however, is never seriously challenged. Is it an anachronistic fallacy to ask why theo-political readers of the Koran can alternatively sanction military, imamic, princely, single-party, or multiparty modes of governance for their otherwise Muslim state, without apparent contradiction? Is it because constitution-writing is a latterday phenomenon that the holy texts, even where juridically explicit, are constitutionally silent? Probably not, for the simple reason that the Koran—just like the Old and New Testaments—was not intended to be a political, much less constitutional, document, but rather a guide for correct conduct and interpersonal behaviour on the sub-state level. In the Muslim tradition, political theorists during the Ottoman period thought that 'the realm of Islamic authenticity lies within the soul of the individual and in the relations of individuals to each other within small communities'.²⁰ Even today, 'the true domain of Islam is still the righteous small community and the ethical individual',²¹ a conception which applies well to other religious traditions. Shaping belief and moderating behaviour in civil society is thus a legitimate function of religion while controlling the state, or seeking to control it, for the same purposes is not.

It is when clerics and religiously-cloaked politicians breach the divide between individual, inter-personal and communitarian prescription and state-level

policy and action that para-theology is being committed. Though their beliefs may be genuinely grounded in a religious creed, para-theologians overstep the line between legitimate theology and the overpoliticisation of religion. And it is here that their actions become most dangerous, for if they do not distinguish between religion and politics, how will their followers?

Religion, nationalism and the nation-state

The relationship between religion and state has been quite different in Western Europe and North America from that in the Second and Third Worlds. Post-Reformation Europe and its migratory offshoots have moved, however fitfully, towards separating church from state. Communist societies strove to coopt religious institutions by incorporating them within the state apparatus. In the Third World many colonised societies, particularly those with large Muslim majorities, used religious integrity as a rallying point for anti-colonial action, especially if the coloniser showed hostility to the indigenous religion. But after independence most Third World nations, including those of the Near and Middle East, erected their polities as European-style nation-states whose basis for legitimation was secular. Thus was Islam disestablished in Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Jordan and superseded by nationalism as the actual *raison d'état*.

Nationalism was supposed not only to unite peoples of various cultures, ethnicities, languages, dialects and religions into unified and independent political entities but to deliver, quite literally, the material goods as well. Economic development was inexorably to follow political decolonisation.

This, of course, has not usually been the case. Even when substantial wealth has been generated (particularly in lands blessed with subterranean petroleum), inequitable distribution has left the majority of people materially disenfranchised and, particularly among urban populations, with a strong sense of aggrievement. Iran under the Shah epitomised this scenario. Elsewhere in the Muslim world, economic stagnation and declining standards of living have been identified as a key condition of 'militant Islam and the politics of redemption'.²² In Latin America, the attraction of liberation theology is also directly linked to economic deprivation and distributive disparities. Hindu mosque-razers in India represent that large stratum for whom the Indian state has not succeeded in raising material conditions. Soviet-style mismanagement and economic inefficiency contributed, in part, to the shift in loyalty from state to church in Poland and, to lesser extents, elsewhere throughout the Soviet bloc.²³

It is perhaps in Africa that the ideology of nationalism has shown itself most bankrupt. Somalia, Liberia and Rwanda are extreme examples of the brittleness of the African nation-state, but their underlying problems are shared throughout the continent. Developmental failure (particularly in the face of famine and drought), constitutional anarchy, governmental corruption, predatory militaries: all these, occurring in political constructs which are themselves the products of arbitrary colonial partition, leave people yearning for alternative systems of hope. Political para-theologians are all too ready to respond. The heightened

political importance of religion in Nigeria, occurring in both Muslim and Christian camps, is a troubling example of African para-theology.²⁴

Not surprisingly popular religion, entailing the 'perceptions, ethic and conventions of various groups divided by occupation, class or gender, and expressed through religious terminology'²⁵ has arisen most prominently in sub-Saharan Africa. Popular religion challenges both secular political hegemony as well as the orthodox, mainstream religious elites which are usually in alliance with them. Even where state-recognised clerics perform a generally politically conservative function and harbour materialistic goals, as Haynes points out, their role as mediators in intra-elite conflicts in Africa does differentiate them from their para-theological colleagues.

Religion and nationalism are not inherently antagonistic. Indeed, they can be complementary, as both colonial-era movements for national liberation and contemporary military chaplaincies in developed states prove. However, when nationalism is discredited on economic, cultural or political grounds, its place cannot be taken by religion *per se*, for religious systems are not inherently equipped to satisfy the political and economic demands made of the nation-state. The ideological space must still be filled (politics, no less than nature, abhors a vacuum) and para-theology is the prime candidate.

Neither are religion and democracy inherently incompatible. Huntington, for one, acknowledges the dynamism of all major religious cultures and the possibility of even Confucian and Muslim societies democratising. But Huntington, along with many political analysts of religion, links national and religious cultures too tightly, involuntarily obscuring the fact that impediments to development and democratisation result not so much from doctrinal essences as from political para-theology.

Religion as a basis for group identity

Political para-theology not only functions as a surrogate form of nationalism ('religious nationalism' is a misleading term) but imparts a seductively powerful basis for sub-state or transnational identity. Kashmiris of India wish to join their land with Pakistan because both are Muslim. Punjabis also consider withdrawal from India on account of their (religious) identity as Sikhs. Bosnian Muslims refuse incorporation in a state of Christian Serbs; Serbian 'ethnic cleansing' is really a form of para-theological murder. Shi'ites and Phalangists acted similarly, only with Lebanese specificity, not so long ago. Atheistic Russians and Hebrew-illiterate Falashas may claim automatic citizenship in Israel, whereas Jerusalem-born Palestinians may not. Self-styled Tamil Tigers attack Sinhalese Buddhists on their shared island. Bombs were planted in Northern Ireland according to the intended victims' (Christian) denomination.

All such examples tell us much about the strength of group identity and the lengths to which members will go to preserve it. They tell us nothing, however, about the religions in whose name, or within whose garb, such politics are conducted. In the case of India, neither the Sikh nor Muslim religion prohibits its adherents from living as religious minorities within the borders of larger states. Christians and Muslims coexisted (and even intermarried) in Yugoslavia

for nearly half a century before political instability gave vent to communal conflict. Modern Zionism, to borrow Robert Bellah's phrase, is more of a civil religion than an expression of orthodox Judaism.²⁶ The tolerance and openness of Hindu and Buddhist theologies makes Sri Lankan fratricide not only a human travesty but a para-theological parody. Though wars between European Protestants and Catholics did have a theological basis in the past, few, if any, are the Northern Irish antagonists today who can articulate a genuinely religious motivation for their respective antipathies today.

Political para-theologians use the appeal of religion to incite their followers to commit a-religious, and sometimes anti-religious, behaviour in order to solidify group membership and gain political power. The establishment of Pakistan is a good instance of the use of para-theology to further personal interest and group solidarity in spite of a true religious imperative. Pakistan's founding fathers were themselves Westernised, privately secular nationalists for whom Islam conveniently provided a powerful justification for statehood. Serbian claims that Orthodoxy was protecting the West from a Muslim onslaught should be regarded in a similar light.

In his insightful and stimulating essay which envisions the possibility of a 'new ethnic order', Myron Weiner develops a typology of ethnic and religious demands that lead to international conflict.²⁷ Except for including a category of 'fundamentalism', however, Weiner treats ethnic and religious claims, and identities, alike. Religious identity, in my view, can and must be categorically differentiated from ethnic identity. Otherwise, one is hard pressed to recognise the critical distinction between religious revolts against the state, which are truly inspired from theology, and pseudo-religious ones, in which religion is merely a referent for group identity.

Religious identity is a matter of shared theology, ritual, belief. Ethnic identity is a matter of common ancestry, descent, history, language, culture and also (though not necessarily) religion. If we do not distinguish the two identities from each other then we cannot hope to demarcate ethnic from religious conflict. The danger of such intellectual confusion is that, by undermining the legitimacy of religion as an instrument of peace, its inherent potential for conflict resolution will be seriously compromised.

Sacralisation of politics versus politicisation of religion

I have been claiming that the para-theology paradigm does not deny the existence of political behaviour which is authentically religious in motivation. Such activity, when subject to certain limits (confined to civil society, non-hegemonic, constitutionally neutral) may be thought of as the sacralisation of politics. It should not be confused with the politicisation of religion, the very hallmark of para-theology.

This paradigm does not mean that politics which is truly religious in inspiration need be peaceful or non-violent, while conflict in the name of religion must be para-theological. Mark Juergensmeyer is correct in arguing that some (most?) religiously motivated killers genuinely believe that their commission of violence is an ineluctable, intermediary step towards a world of divinely-

sanctioned peace.²⁸ But one must be able to set apart the genuine (if misguided) martyr ready to commit suicide by self-explosion from the foreign government agent making the explosives available for reasons of (para-theocratic) state. Both the nature of the religion and the circumstances of the politics will determine whether the action or activity is sacralised politics or politicised religion.

Take the notion of *jihad* which, though reinterpreted by theological modernists as spiritual renewal or conquest of inner impurity, may still refer to armed struggle to defend the Faith. Using the criteria of para-theology, we can conceptually distinguish the invocation of *jihad* by Saddam Hussein to legitimise war over Kuwait from those *mujahaddin* who legitimately fought to defend Islam in Afghanistan. (Of course, following the Soviet withdrawal some of the *mujahaddin*, in a bid to consolidate power based on clan, have lapsed into para-theology.) In the USA it is useful to understand that, by itself, the anti-abortion movement may be a genuine expression of the sacralisation of politics, while the New Christian Right, though it encapsulates 'right-to-life' advocates, fits the definition of para-theology.

To recapitulate, the paradigm is intended as a descriptive, not proscriptive, device to distinguish between authentically religious behaviour which impinges on society at large from para-theology proper, which bears the following characteristics and qualifications:

- Activists seek political power in religion's name. (An elected cleric, such as Massachusetts representative in the 1970s Father Robert Drinan, was not a para-theologian for he did not run for office as a priest *per se* or in the name of Catholicism. In contrast, by identifying with the religious Right in the 1980s, Ronald Reagan did act para-theologically.)
- It aims to restructure the state, tinker with governmental structures, remake the constitutional order, or simply rule through para-theologians at the helm of the polity.
- Religious identity is entangled with or collapsed into ethnic or national expressions of identity; theological bases of identity are eclipsed by ethnically or nationalistically derived ones.
- Basis for conflict is defined in religious categories but lacks theological grounding (eg Protestants versus Catholics in Ireland, Catholics versus Muslims in Bosnia and Croatia, Hindus versus Buddhists in Sri Lanka).

The common intertwining of religion and politics should not preclude conceptual rigour when the two intermingle. If war is too important to be left only to generals, and if politics is too important to be left only to politicians, surely religion is too important to be left to clerics. Religion's impact on democracy mandates, for example, that contemporary democratic theory step beyond the familiar confines of secular analysis.

Policy-makers ignore theology at their peril when analysing instances of religiously defined behaviour. For when they blithely dismiss doctrine, they too risk falling into the trap of the para-theologians, those political actors whose success lies precisely in obfuscating political motivation behind religious inspiration.

Notes

- ¹ Ken Jowitt, 'The New World Disorder,' in Diamond & Plattner (eds), *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1993.
- ² For a thorough exposition of this paradigm, see the special issue of *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* devoted to the theme of 'Political Islam' edited by Butterworth & Zartman, 542, 1992.
- ³ See Lahouari Addi's treatment of Algeria ('Islamicist utopia and democracy') in *ibid*.
- ⁴ See Gideon Aaron, 'Jewish Zionism fundamentalism', in Martin Marty & R Scott Appleby (eds), *Fundamentalisms Observed*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- ⁵ Recent examples include the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas and the mass suicide of the Solar Temple millenarians in Switzerland, Canada and France.
- ⁶ George Wiegel, 'Religion and peace: an argument complexified', *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 1991, pp 27–41.
- ⁷ Samuel Huntington, 'Religion and the third wave', *The National Interest*, Summer 1991, pp 29–42.
- ⁸ For a comprehensive and well documented attempt to highlight the ecumenical, including non-Western, potential for religion in peace making, see Douglas Johnston & Cynthia Sampson (eds), *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- ⁹ See David R Smock, *Religious Perspectives on War. Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Attitudes Toward Force After the Gulf War*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1992.
- ¹⁰ See David R Smock, *Perspectives on Pacifism. Christian, Jewish and Muslim Views on Nonviolence and International Conflict*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1995.
- ¹¹ Irving Louis Horowitz, 'Religion, the State, and Politics', in Myron Aronoff (ed), *Religion and Politics. Political Anthropology*, Volume 3, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1984, pp 5–9.
- ¹² George Moyser, 'Politics and religion in the modern world: an overview', in Moyser (ed.), *Politics and Religion in the Modern World*, London: Routledge, 1991.
- ¹³ José Casanova, 'Private and public religions', *Social Research*, 59, 1992.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid*, p 57, pp 17–57.
- ¹⁵ Frank Flinn offers a good synthesis of the major tenets of liberation theology in his contribution to Richard Rubenstein's volume *Spirit Matters. The Worldwide Impact of Religion on Contemporary Politics*, New York: Paragon House, 1987.
- ¹⁶ See John Voll 'Conservative and traditional brotherhoods', *Annals*, ('Political Islam' issue).
- ¹⁷ Patrick Gaffney, 'Popular Islam', *Annals* ('Political Islam' issue), p 49.
- ¹⁸ Charles Liebman & Steven Cohen, *Two Worlds of Judaism. The Israeli and American Experiences*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990.
- ¹⁹ Gananath Obeyesekere, 'Buddhism and conscience: an exploratory essay', *Daedalus*, 120:3, 1991.
- ²⁰ Ira Lapidus, 'The golden age: the political concepts of Islam', *Annals* ('Political Islam' issue), p 17.
- ²¹ *Ibid*, p 25.
- ²² Mary-Jane Deeb, 'Militant Islam and the politics of redemption', *Annals* ('Political Islam' issue).
- ²³ Zdzislaw Walaszek, 'An open issue of legitimacy: the state and the church in Poland'; Philip Walters, 'The Russian Orthodox Church and the Soviet state'; Jurgen Moltmann, 'Religion and state in Germany: West and East', in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 483, 1986, special issue on 'Religion and the State: The Struggle for Legitimacy and Power'.
- ²⁴ See John Hunwick, 'An African case study of political Islam: Nigeria', *Annals*, ('Political Islam' issue), pp 143–155; and Jibrin Ibrahim, 'Religion and political turbulence in Nigeria', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 29, 1991, pp 115–136.
- ²⁵ Jeff Haynes, 'Popular religion and politics in sub-Saharan Africa', *Third World Quarterly*, 16, 1995, p 102.
- ²⁶ Charles Liebman & Don-Yehiya Eliezer, *Civil Religion in Israel*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983.
- ²⁷ Myron Weiner, 'Peoples and states in a new ethnic order?', *Third World Quarterly*, 13, 1992, pp 317–333.
- ²⁸ Mark Juergensmeyer, 'The terrorists who long for peace', *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, 20, 1996, pp 1–11.

