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Book Review. Religious Liberty in America: The First Amendment in Historical and Contemporary Perspective

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which *ought* cannot be derived from *is*. However, there is no mention of the historical background to this theory nor of its rejection by some notable contemporary philosophers. Theologians need to study more philosophy. However, with its comprehensive account of the contributions of twentieth-century moralists, this work provides a place to start. It is necessary reading for all moralists.

The Catholic University of America

BRIAN JOHNSTONE, C.Ss.R.

Religious Liberty in America: The First Amendment in Historical and Contemporary Perspective. By Bruce T. Murray. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, in association with the Foundation for American Communications. 2008. Pp. xvi, 213. \$19.95 paperback. ISBN 978-1-558-49638-5.)

Authored by journalist Bruce T. Murray, this concise and readable book discusses topics relating to the religion clauses of the First Amendment and, more generally, to the interaction of religion and politics in the United States. It is the outgrowth of a series of seminars on journalism, religion, and public life, sponsored by the Foundation for American Communications (FACS) and the Pew Charitable Trusts. As an editor for FACS, Murray covered the seminars, and he draws heavily upon the scholarly lectures that they featured, but he incorporates and relies upon a range of additional sources as well. In line with its origins, the book is designed especially for journalists, to assist them in their reporting, but it also is written for undergraduate students and general readers. Murray intends the book to be “an easy read on a tough topic,” a book that “boil[s] the issues down to the journalist’s proverbial ‘nut graph’” (p. xv). As such, the book is not so much an original contribution as a primer on the topics it discusses. Even so, the book is not simplistic, and it backs its assertions with references and footnotes to primary sources and scholarly materials.

In the course of the book, Murray addresses the character and diversity of religion in the United States, the historical underpinnings of the First Amendment’s religion clauses, and the Supreme Court’s evolving interpretations of these provisions. He gives special attention to the views of the current justices, including the court’s most recent appointees, Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito. He highlights debates concerning the role of religion in the public schools, public displays of the Ten Commandments, and the “faith-based initiative” of President George W. Bush. In addition, the book includes an especially engaging and in-depth chapter on American civil religion. This chapter relies upon the scholarly work of Robert Bellah, among others, even as it traces American civil religion from John Winthrop’s (and Ronald Reagan’s) “city upon a hill” to contemporary disputes over immigration, the “culture wars,” and the religious rhetoric of Bush and other political leaders.

Throughout, the book cites historical antecedents and parallels as it considers contemporary issues. In discussing civil religion, for example, Murray addresses the roots of public virtue and economic self-interest as competing strands of the American dream, and he explains how current debates over immigration are similar to earlier episodes, albeit with significant differences as well. Likewise, in discussing the First Amendment and church-state relations, Murray argues (drawing upon lectures by Charles Haynes) that today's competing positions trace their origins to colonial times and, in particular, to the views of Winthrop of Massachusetts and Roger Williams of Rhode Island. Winthrop's "city upon a hill" demanded a tightly knit community featuring collaboration between church and state. Williams, by contrast, advocated freedom of conscience, free exercise of religion, and the separation of church and state. As Murray suggests, echoes of this debate have reverberated ever since. He also notes the historical antecedents of specific contemporary issues, including, for example, debates concerning the Ten Commandments and governmental funding of religious social-service providers.

This is a useful book for its intended purpose. It is a highly accessible introduction to the topics it addresses, complete with references for documentation or further reading. It is largely descriptive, as opposed to analytical or theoretical. The book is well written, engaging, and balanced in its presentations of competing views.

Maurer School of Law, Indiana University Bloomington DANIEL O. CONKLE

Frontiers of Faith: Bringing Catholicism to the West in the Early Republic.

By John R. Dichtl. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky. 2008. Pp. x, 240. \$50.00. ISBN 978-0-813-12486-5.)

Relying on documents from Catholic priests and bishops, John Dichtl argues that in the backwoods of Pennsylvania and Maryland to the far edge of Indiana, and especially in Kentucky from the 1780s through the 1820s, Catholics initially lived in harmony with their non-Catholic neighbors. As explored in the first two chapters, Catholic leaders, such as Archbishop John Carroll of Baltimore, encouraged such cordial relations. As a result, frontier priests not only performed sacramental duties but also bought and sold land, fostered businesses, engaged in politics, and started schools, all the while attempting to interact with non-Catholics as pleasantly as possible. Although the Catholic laity did not always see eye to eye with their priests, especially when priestly salaries were at stake, Catholics in general soon came to rely on priests for demonstrating how to survive as a religious minority.

At the same time some priests proved to be inept, misguided, and/or combative, as discussed in chapter 3. Since priest misbehavior threatened to stir latent anti-Catholic sentiment, Catholic authorities learned to downplay internal dissension and to handle public embarrassments as quickly and quietly as