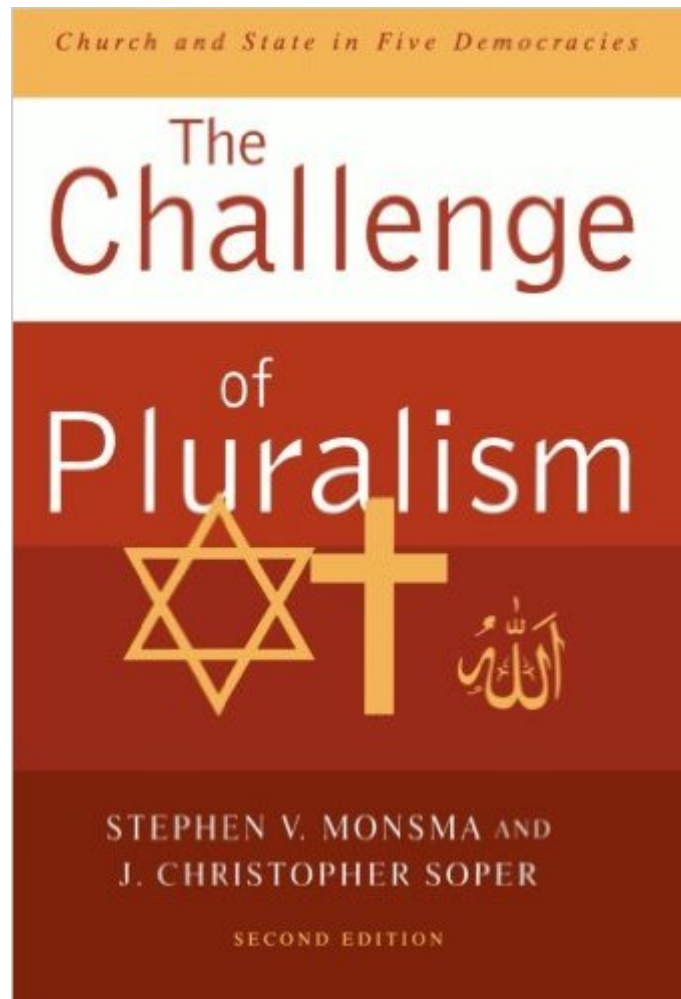


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The Challenge Of Pluralism: Church And State In Five Democracies



Synopsis

Now in a thoroughly revised and updated edition, this essential text offers a rigorous, systematic comparison of church-state relations in the United States, Australia, the Netherlands, Germany, and England. As successful and stable political democracies, these five countries share a commitment to protecting the religious rights of their citizens. Yet as the book demonstrates, each has taken substantially different approaches to resolving basic church-state questions. Stephen V. Monsma and J. Christopher Soper examine the historical roots of those differences and explain how each state addresses contemporary church-state issues. The authors judge each government's success in protecting the religious rights of its citizens using a framework based on the ideal of governmental neutrality or evenhandedness toward people of all faiths and of none. Providing clarity on the little-understood, evolving relationship between church and state in the West, this book provides an invaluable comparative analysis of a topic that is increasingly a source of profound political and social conflict. Monsma and Soper conclude that the American conception of church-state separation, with its traditional emphasis on avoiding government establishment of religion, actually discriminates against religious groups by denying access to government services provided to other organizations. The authors persuasively argue that the United States can learn a great deal from other Western nations in promoting religious neutrality and the free exercise of religion.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I give this book more exactly 4,5 stars. I am glad I acquired the book and included it in my personal

library of political science. The authors build on a solid framework of different church-state regimes. They analyse neither too many nor too few countries. However, extension by others to cover more countries would be welcome. One can also ask if a similar approach could not be used for studying relations of the state to other organisations than churches. In all cases, the hypothesis is that explicit separation of the state from certain values leads to implicit support to those who are the strongest in pushing the values of their own.

Phenomenal read.

ok

The Challenge of Pluralism If the book's warm cozy cover, pressing Christianity, Judaism and Islam together doesn't give you a clue, the ridiculous association of the word Secularist with atheist and agnostic should. (See title of review) Secularism and Secularists advocate the separation of church and state. The original Secularists were in fact religious, and were pleading for protection by the government from different religions. (The Danbury Baptists, for instance). I would expect better prose from a 5th Grader, and the book is so entirely banal that I, and any literate individual living in the 21st century would also feel, insulted. The book is in essence, a critique of secularism- stating that it is an antiquated policy that best be tossed away in order to make everyone feel yet again, pleasant happy and cozy. This however is not the nature of religion, and the Founding Fathers knew this to be the case. Religion thrives on opposition and WILL NEVER BE HAPPY until everyone is of the same mind AT WHICH POINT reformations and schisms occur, naturally creating a divide where there once was none.

this was a required text in a college political science class. the book gave concise examples of concepts and read easily. plus, dr. hertzke was one of the book's editors.

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