

Peter Augustine Lawler

**HERETICAL COMPROMISES:  
AMERICA'S ACCIDENTAL THOMISM**

I want to explain why Americans, from the time of the Founding onward, have built better than they knew. Their political choices have often been better than their self-understandings – than their theories and theologies. My case for American moderation is meant to chasten the hope of libertarians that every feature of our lives will be reconstructed according to the principle of maximum feasible autonomy or unfettered personal choice. It's also meant to calm the fear of many conservatives that American liberalism is too purely modern or too purely individualistic to be sustainable over the long term. What sometimes seems to be a fairly intractable American "culture war" has typically been mitigated by compromises – compromises between quite different and, from an orthodox Christian view (say, the account of the Trinitarian personal *logos* of our current philosopher-pope), heretical views of who we are and what we're supposed to do.

Some conservatives say that what distinguishes America is that ours is the most modern and untraditional or unhinged country. Let me give some evidence from that point of view, which certainly ought to be taken seriously.

Certainly there never was a pre-modern America. Americans have no experience of the medieval village that gets Mark Henrie all nostalgic. Americans have no experience of the Aristotelian agrarian polis that Alasdair MacIntyre says is indispensable for human flourishing. Although the agrarian localist Wendell Berry sometimes writes about the unsettling of America, he's also written that America – the country or project – was born unsettled. As Tocqueville explains, America

was founded by those sophisticated, egalitarian idealists, the Puritans, and by those adventurers who ended up in Virginia in pursuit of wealth without doing real work.

What about American religion? Well, most of it has been Christian – that is various forms of Christian heresy. Consider the ridiculous and tyrannical Puritans who wanted to turn every sin into a crime, the hyper-emo and semi-illiterate evangelicals, the Mormons, the incomprehensible tongue-speaking Pentecostals and the holiness snake-handlers. The New Age, Wiccan stuff that's popped up among our sophisticates is hardly any better and is not even in any way Christian. Meanwhile, our mainstream Protestants have made – from the beginning – too many compromises with modern individualism to have served effectively as counterweights to both the extremes of self-expressive pantheism and unhinged enthusiasm that's characterized our beliefs. What about the more orthodox and traditional religion of our immigrants – such as the Catholics and Jews? Lots of conservatives complain that America has changed Catholicism a lot more than Catholicism has changed America. And the Orthodox Jews say the same thing about most American Jews.

Ross Douthat recently published a book called *Bad Religion*. His claim is that American religion has become bad – that is, self-indulgently heretical – lately. Critic after critic has responded: don't you realize American religion has always been heretical and has often been flaky? The self-helpy theology of that silly movie *Eat Pray Love* that Douthat spends so much time deconstructing seems plenty sensible compared to what a lot of those Transcendentalists were thinking and doing.

As Alexis de Tocqueville wrote over 180 years ago, the Americans – having rejected the intellectual and emotional resources of tradition and deference to personal authority – find it hard to think and act reasonably. The Americans are characterized less by reason than by will, and so they are full of exaggerations: at one moment vainly overestimating the significance of who they are and what they do, and in another paralyzed by the perception of the puny insignificance of any particular being.

The Americans, in one mode, really are the imperialist transhumanists those who write for *The American Conservative* hate – attempting to impose themselves and their liberal ideology not only on everyone on this planet but, as we see on *Star Trek*, every being in the cosmos. And they're always in the process of changing nature itself into nothing but a resource to serve their liberated personal convenience. In another mode, the Americans are ready to listen to their scientists who say they're nothing but insignificant specks or conscious rocks or really smart and ultrasocial forms of species fodder.

To show how modern us Americans are, Alexis de Tocqueville called us Cartesianes who've never read a word of Descartes. That means the modern philosophical method – radical doubt of everything but ME – is also the democratic method: the rejection of every claim of personal authority as an undemocratic attempt to rule me. That means American democrats use words like privilege with a frown and words like deconstruct with a smile. They deconstruct the privileged position of pa-

rents, priests, philosophers, preachers, poets and so forth in our society. No personal authority deserves to be privileged over thinking for myself. Thinking otherwise turns me into a sucker.

So the Americans, having rejected all personal authority, lack what it takes to think or act effectively. They end up deferring to impersonal authority of various kinds – such as fashionable opinion, technology, expert self-help theories that begin with “studies show,” and “history.”

That conclusion allows some conservatives to say that America is a consumerist techno-wasteland full of people who lack the resources to govern themselves. We can find that conclusion animating the thought of many followers of MacIntyre, as well as the pessimism of agrarians such as Wendell Berry.

But you know that conclusion is not true. Tocqueville knew that too. He says Americans exempted their religion from their habitual dogmatic doubt, and it's religion that gave them dogmatic confidence to think and act confidently and freely. Even when we admit that American religion is a variety of heresies, we have to remember heresies aren't all bad. Why are heresies not all bad? They highlight something that's been neglected by the tradition. They usually have a Christian *point*. When I watch a low-church movie starring Robert Duvall – *Tender Mercies* or *The Apostle* – I know I'm seeing the portrayal of Christian truth, if far from the whole truth. The murderer on-the-run preacher in *The Apostle* who founds a church where class and status make no difference, a congregation of displaced misfits who are poor and poorer, dumb and dumber, black and white, male and female, and fatter and fatter still is telling people who need to hear (because they can't read) what they most need to know to turn their lives around: they can be saved, despite it all, if they believe in Jesus and “Holy Ghost power.” There's something exceptional about a country that carries the truth about amazing grace in its popular culture and its country music (great point and directly counter to what Bloom argues in *Closing re: pop culture*).

Conservatives often exaggerate what a techno-wasteland America is by denying that evangelicals and Pentecostals are really Christian. Sure, no other country is plagued so much by warehouse churches, touchy-feely platitudes posing as theology, and the soul-challenged music that's called Christian contemporary, praise music, and so forth. But none of those criticisms get to the question of whether the evangelicals really believe or whether they really practice the virtues – beginning with charity – which flow from love of the personal God. Where would America be without the exceptional fact of their belief? Certainly there has to be room for that free, egalitarian, and virtuous belief – and the whole Christ-haunted South – in an account of who we are.

Not only are heresies not all bad, American heresies – American dogmas – have had the wonderful tendency to kind of balance each other out. Certainly we wouldn't get much done if we were all fervent Pentecostals, but we're not.

America's first and most wonderful and effective theological balancing act is our Declaration of Independence. It gets its greatness by being a legislative compromise between the Deistic and more Calvinist (or residually Puritan) members of Congress. Congress amended Jefferson's Deistic/Lockean draft, "mangling" it, in Jefferson's own opinion, but actually improving it. The compromise is between the unrelational, past-tense God of nature of the modern philosophers – particularly John Locke – and the personal, judgmental, providential Creator of the Puritans. By reconciling the God of nature with the God of the Bible, our Declaration can be called a kind of accidental Thomism – an accidental affirmation of the personal natural law of St. Thomas Aquinas. That result was intended by neither the Calvinist nor Lockean/Deistic parties to the compromise. The Americans, through legislative compromise and the other modes of statesmanship and democratic deliberation built, as John Courtney Murray claims, better than they knew. (In a way this compromise best represents XN doctrine, marrying its heavy emphasis on the transpolitical to the political, completing on modern terms the project of Augustine's City of God. The project, that is, of finding a political domicile for the individual quest for salvation, a thoroughly non-political end.)

Had our Declaration been the exclusive product of the original Puritans, it would have been theocratic – that is, not orthodox Christianity. The Puritans, Alexis de Tocqueville tells us, were heretics in the sense that they were about basing the law of their political community on the law found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. There's not a word in the New Testament that would justify their effort to criminalize every sin. The heretical Puritans were authentically Christian, though, in their view that every person has a soul that needs to be informed about its origin and destiny with the word of God, and in their political view that under God all sinful persons made in God's image are equal.

The American Founding's balance was achieved through the Deistic or individualistic criticism of the Puritans' idealistic, intrusive, highly personal idea of Christian citizenship, and the Puritanical criticism of the Deistic detachment of one person from another – and, of course, from the personal, relational, judgmentally and providentially intrusive God. The Puritans sometimes fanatically egalitarian idealism balances the Lockean's selfish indifference to anyone's being beyond one's own. The Puritans, from our political view, were overly relational and displayed too much political concern for people's souls. The Deists aimed, in the name of personal freedom, to empty political and even social life of much of its properly relational or participatory content.

Our Declaration suggests that we are free and relational beings by nature – natural persons, without referring at all, of course, to Biblical revelation. Our natural longings as free persons point toward a certain kind of Creator, and we know who we are in that respect even if we don't have particular knowledge of or faith in who that God is. (Part of what accounts for the different views of democracy between Plato and the XN Americans has to do with a different understanding of these

natural longings, or different psycho-phenomenological interpretations of human transcendence. The XN accepts the experience as an anthropological datum but makes the yearning for eternity accessible to all, and therefore moral in character. XN practice can counterbalance Cartesian theory, I think, because it comprehends transcendence in moral and not just theoretical terms.)

The Declaration really is at the core of American identity, and the truth it teaches is universal. Everyone knows Mr. Jefferson thought every human being has natural rights, including, of course, women and blacks. And Tocqueville said that not only the egalitarian political teaching of the Puritans was free from prejudice. The egalitarian and participatory principles of their political founding, they thought, could be applied everywhere. The Puritans believed that any just political order should be informed by the truth that every human being is a citizen of the City of God. (Sometimes occurs to me to ask: what was it about pre-Declaration Americans that made the compromise possible? In other words, that contingent agreement is already capturing something inherent in the American mind, fully articulating it, making Jefferson's faux humble comments about his drafting capturing a zeitgeist truer than he could understand at the time.)

The truth the Declaration teaches is also insistently particular. It's really personal. The bottom line is the unique and irreplaceable significance of every human person. What makes that bottom line so insistent and particular is the combination of Puritanical or Calvinist and Lockean concerns. (So in a way Americans are the most doctrinal but the least ideological people ever.)

The thing that might have amazed Tocqueville the most about our country is the determination that every person be educated to exercise their freedom. No person, the Puritans and Jefferson agree, exists by nature to be dominated by another, and slavery is contrary to the truth about who each of us is. That truth shouldn't be hidden from anyone, because nobody should be suckered by lies – either, the Puritans emphasize, the lies of Satanic deceivers who distort what the Bible says in the service of their own pride, or, the Lockeans emphasize, aristocrats who vainly try to persuade us that the point of our lives is to be of service to them.

From our Lockean Deists, we get the truth that every human being has interests. Nobody is above and nobody is below being a being with interests. We're all free beings who work, we're free to work, and stuck with working for ourselves. The result Tocqueville observed, in America, is universal literacy and universal technical education. But that Lockean view, by itself, is at the expense of higher education, the cultivation of the soul, which is dismissed as a waste of valuable time. That's why when our libertarians criticize our colleges today, it's for charging so much money for all kinds of nonsense – such as philosophy and theology – that just won't help you get a job. (Right, and the more sophisticated ones just want those theories that underwrite hyper-practical libertarianism to be taught.)

It's from the Puritans that we get the idea that education can be for the sake of more than mere work or productivity. Every person has a soul, and so everyone

should be able to read what the Bible says about one's personal destiny and charitable, moral responsibilities for oneself. The Puritans, the neo-Puritanical novelist Marilynne Robinson explains, are a key source of our devotion to liberal education, to education for civilization.

The Jeffersonians, we might say, excel in the pursuit of the means or conditions of freedom, but it's the Puritans who supplied us with our original insight about the personal end or point of our freedom. Most of our best colleges have had a religious inspiration, and they suffer in the most important respects when they lose confidence in what they can do for souls. Robinson calls attention to the neo-Puritanical Oberlin in the 1830s. That college offered everyone – including blacks and women – a liberal education and insisted that everyone on campus, including professors, both do manual labor and have time for leisurely study. (To see how Oberlin has changed, watch the brilliant HBO series *Girls*, which is about a graduate of that school who's absolutely clueless about who she is as a person made to love, work, and know. So she has no idea what's she supposed to do, and college didn't help her out at all.)

For most Americans, the true understanding of our religious liberty has typically depended on public education being completed by Sunday schools. We know technical education and civic education aren't enough, but we forget why without Sunday school.

Sophisticated Americans, from our Founders until those around today, have always resisted the Puritanical correction to their enlightened individualism. One reason that this correction is indispensable is that the devotion to individual rights, by itself doesn't justify the personal sacrifice required to achieve egalitarian political reform. It was the neo-Puritanical abolitionists who produced the relentless egalitarian agitation that made the Civil War inevitable. The Civil Rights movement wouldn't have succeeded without the social reformism based on a kind of residually Puritanical or Biblical conception of citizenship, one also that didn't shrink from the sacrifice of one's own blood for justice.

Then there's the American Puritanical personal morality so criticized by the rest of the highly civilized world. When some European says to you: "The trouble with Americans such as you is that you're too Puritanical," your response should be: "I'm Puritanical and proud of it. You should be too. Look at you!" The typical European criticism of Americans is actually that they're both Puritanical repressive moralists and Lockean workaholic capitalists. The proper response: there's nothing wrong with that – it's civilized to be moral and both necessary and fulfilling to be productive. We're the people who know how to balance love and work. About the Old World and its seemingly decayed-beyond-repair Christianity, Americans can say there's a both a shortage of work and a shortage of love. Thanks to our observant Christians, we can add, the birth dearth – the demographic crisis – that threatens the very future of free government and "Western culture" in Europe is a very manageable problem in ours.



Tocqueville notices, of course, the virtues of chastity and marital fidelity being on display in America like they had never been before. And even today, we can say that Americans, because of their Christianity, take those virtues more seriously than people in comparable countries. To be Puritanical, remember, is to be concerned with the souls of your fellow citizens and fellow human beings. It's easy to overdo that concern, as we Americans did with the piece of Puritanical fanaticism called Prohibition. But don't forget that the opposite of excessively intrusive concern is the yawn of indifference, which could hardly be a virtue. A Puritanical residue Tocqueville praises in America was Sunday closing laws, which gave everyone a leisurely respite from the busyness of commerce to focus through sermons and reading on one's own singular immortal destiny, to focus on one's own soul and its relational needs and duties.

I've probably overdone my praise of the Puritans, and so to restore the balance that is our Declaration I'll go on to explain the many ways in which our country has benefited from the Deism of John Locke. I can't do that without saying a bit more about what Deism is.

Lockean Deists speak of God, but in the past-tense. He's on a permanent vacation. He's not actively engaged in our lives. God made us free or somewhat unnatural persons, who have to institute government to free ourselves from our fearful discontent with our natural existence. The teaching of the source of our freedom is that you're on your own to escape from nature to secure our inalienable rights. We must provide for ourselves because neither God – the author of each of our beings – nor nature cares about any of us in particular.

Locke and Jefferson view us all as free persons, and so as simply a part of nature. The mystery of the personal identity each of us experiences makes room in Locke for belief in a real Creator, and it certainly is a personal refutation of those self-forgetting thinkers who claim that all is necessity. Locke's "Nature's God" is not the God of Aristotle, who is not a personal but a principle or a kind of giant magnet.

The mystery of Christianity, rejected by most philosophers and scientists, is personal, relational monotheism. The most aggressive part of Locke's heresy is the rejection of that mystery – the mystery of the Trinity. For Locke, God is personal, but not relational, just as we are personal, but not deep down relational. God, like each of us, is finally on his own.

Locke's personal, Christian heresy is actually more mysterious than the doctrine of the Trinity. How can God be both personal and not relational and loving? How can each of us be personal but not relational and loving? Can such a lonely and isolated personal identity really be possible? We can say for certain that Locke separates "personal" from "relational" in order to make it clear enough that personal identity and security is the bottom line, the point of all being. Locke, remember, is most justly famous for mocking out of existence the hyper-relational traditional arguments for tyranny, such as Filmer's divine right of kings, which displayed us all as one big family under the personal paternalistic monarch ruling in God's image.

The detaching of “personal” from “relational” to maximize personal liberty also largely explains Locke’s blistering caricature of familial and parental authority. He, for example, advocates freedom, as individuals, from all dependence on men and, if you read carefully, all biological imperatives specific to their sex.

The shared personal focus explains why American Lockeans and more orthodox Christians have allied against every modern effort to reduce particular persons to expendable parts of some civic, natural, or Historical whole. It led the Americans to defeat every form of progressive ideology that would sacrifice real persons living today for some vague perfect tomorrow – for some historically created paradise right here on earth. It’s that personal focus – whether found in orthodox believers or feminist autonomy freaks – that’s kept Americans from really believing for a moment that Mr. Darwin teaches the whole truth about who we are.

We also see the influence of this Lockean/Christian understanding in the determination of James Madison that religion in America not be reduced to a civil theology – to degrading lies about our divine significance as a nation for beings who are citizens and nothing more. Our Constitution is silent on God precisely because it presupposes the person’s freedom from political domination to discover his conscientious duties to his Creator.

The separation of politics, science, and economic life from theocratic domination is the true teaching of the Gospel. The separation of church and state – or the abolition of civil theology – only makes sense in terms of the Christian understanding of who each of us is. That’s why the Italian theorist Marcello Pena, for one, is wrong to say that “cultural Christianity” can be Europe’s “civil theology.” If what the Christians teach about the person is true, then civil theology is a degrading lie. If it’s not true, then there’s no barrier to the state using religion as vehicle of popular control.

We can say that the relative impersonality of the modern state is a radical improvement, on a Christian foundation, over the ancient polis and personal monarchies. The authority of the king is different in kind from that of the personal God. The relatively impersonal authority of the state is circumscribed by the more personal and relational authority of religion as an organized community of thought and action. It goes without saying that a pure Lockean can’t do justice to the purpose of the church in addressing our deepest longings as social and relational persons. But, thanks to our Puritanism or Calvinism, our Lockeanism hasn’t been that pure.

From this view, the “totalitarian democracy” of the French Revolution and its products (say, 1920s Mexico or the Soviet Union) isn’t, most deeply, a Christian heresy, but an attempt to restore the unity that Rousseau imagined was civil theology, a unity that was forever exploded by the Christian revelation of the whole truth about the human person. The American won’t be martyred by civil or ecclesiastical authorities for either refusing to swear allegiance to the state or refusing to swear allegiance to Christ the King. American Christians can be dutifully loyal to both state and church, because neither claims competence over the sphere of the other. Americans resist both political domination of religion and religious domination of politics.



Even, or perhaps especially, the progress of science – liberated in a technological direction by the modern emphasis on serving the needs of the free person – has really been progress from a Christian viewpoint. It is surely Christian to demand that science, politics, and economics have to be justified through the elevation of ordinary lives. Manners and morals, for a long while in our country, were universalized or democratized much more than abolished.

Modern science is also a revelation of who we are as free beings – although not, of course, a complete revelation. Modern science overemphasizes, in its way, our homelessness – our personal contingency – in a sometimes heroic effort to make this world a better home for us. It, of course, fails to abolish our homelessness, because it can't address its deepest cause. Nonetheless, there is something Christian in acknowledging our homelessness – our inability to be fully at home in nature or “the city.” We're right to be concerned that the personal obsessions that fuel the transhumanist aspirations of modern science will be at the cost of living well as relational beings, and that, once again, is why our Deistic heresy has to be balanced by our Puritanical one.

Our admirable friendly critic Solzhenitsyn, remember, called modern technology – with its dislocating effects on, for example, the relations between the generations – another trial of free will. Technology, unguided by the needs of free and relational beings, produces anxious loneliness, and that is why, beneath the surface of American happy-talk pragmatism, Solzhenitsyn heard the howl of existentialism. But there's also no reason not to believe that technological progress couldn't be guided by the one true progress that can occur in each personal life. Our present philosopher-pope added that the technological dimension of human freedom is, in one way, a gift that clarifies who we are. Technology, as the American Thomistic Walker Percy said, can, properly understood, make us more alive than ever to the truth that this life is a pilgrimage – rooted in existential dislocation – for each of us.

So obviously I'm going to conclude that the balance of heresies that is the genius of our Declaration is threatened today. You might well be annoyed at my vanity in thinking that I know what true balance is. All I'm doing is making as deliberate as I can the Thomism – the personal theory of natural law – that can make the most sense of the compromise between Deists and the Calvinists. According to the greatest American Catholic political thinkers ever, Orestes Brownson and John Courtney Murray, the gift American Catholics can offer their country is a theory that is adequate to the great and enduring practical accomplishment of our political Founders. To sustain an accident over time, you really do have to know why it was actually providential.

In my opinion, our legislatures remain capable of striking the appropriate balance. There's no reason our cultural conflict can't generate deliberate compromises on issues such as abortion, gay rights, and the future of our entitlements. The autonomy freaks can be chastened by the relational Christians, and some Christians can be elevated from their fundamentalism through the clash of reasons that produce

democratic compromise. It could be that deliberation on abortion would tilt policy further and further in the direction of life, in the direction of the babies that could alleviate our birth dearth and are indispensable for the future of being relational. The emerging consensus on marriage might be more of a problem for conservatives, but that might be because we don't yet understand that it's possible to balance free personal identity with the imperatives of relationality – and so to accept gays fully as an exception – but only as an exception – to the biological rule of heterosexual normativity that governs our highly social species. This compromise, admittedly, has become tougher than it should be because we've gone too far in thinking about both marriage in parenthood (in the Lockean direction), and in separating “personal” from “relational.” It's also tougher than it should be, because both sides on the gay-marriage dispute deny the good will and solid – if flawed or incomplete – arguments of the other. The Christians, it's too often said, who defend traditional or Biblical marriage “hate gays,” and the gays, it's also said, “hate Christians.”

Our Courts and bureaucrats increasingly tell us that same-sex marriage is a “Civil Rights issue.” Their intention is to silence their opponents as the equivalent of racists, as people with whom compromise is unacceptable, as people who unreasonably deprive persons of their dignity. One reason among many that our controversy over marriage should be decided by legislatures and not Courts is that, we can hope, the losing side, for now, retains the legitimate freedom to persuade the people that they acted in error. The more general problem is, of course, that legislative compromise has been too largely displaced by the high principle that animates judges and bureaucrats.

Our Court – for example, in *Lawrence v. Texas* – understands the word liberty in our Constitution to be nothing more than a weapon to be used by each generation of Americans to expand the realm of individual autonomy over time. That means that purely Lockean theory is to trump what we know through science – even or especially through Darwin – about who we are as social animals. It trumps, in other words, realistic compromise by relational persons oriented by God and nature toward the truth about who we are.

We see that purely Lockean theory, of course, in the HHS interpretation of the healthcare mandate: the right of the autonomous individual trumps the freedom of the church to be governed by relational imperatives that are beyond the competence of government to judge. But how hard could it be to remember that our idea of personal liberty presupposes that our relational longings point us in the direction of shared devotion to a personal God?

So while we American Thomists see plenty of room for concern, there's also plenty of room for hope in who we are as free and relational persons by nature. We're all for judicial restraint, getting employers – including, of course, the churches – and government bureaucrats out of the healthcare business, and for discrediting the idea that high principle should ordinarily displace legislative compromise.

If you think about it, the Court's efforts to displace our legislatures might produce a kind of coherence, but almost never a genuinely decisive and enduring result. Judicial pronouncements are made in the context of particular cases, and they're really not supposed to keep citizens from continuing to think through the meaning of the Constitution and the constitutional solution to particular controversies on their own. But in recent decades, our judges, liberal elites, and bureaucrats have claimed that they make judicial decisions that are more "final" than they conceivably can be. Attempts at judicial imperialism – or the overreaches sometimes called judicial legislation – have become attempts to stifle civic deliberation without producing a genuinely authoritative alternative. The most recent and obvious example here is abortion. *Roe v. Wade* hasn't resolved the constitutional or moral issue for Americans, but it's made real discussion of the issue – and the compromise of reasonable contending claims – impossible until the judicial decision is reversed.

Our "cultural war" can easily be seen to be between dogmatic secularists and dogmatic Christians. My more friendly interpretation is that it's mainly between two forms of Christian heresy – Lockean and Protestant Trinitarian. These two heretical forms – working together – have produced a country in which almost everyone "thinks personally" now. But it's also easy to see that thinking too personally can be at the expense of the relational context in which persons can think clearly, act confidently, find status or significance, find both love and duties, and be happy.

As our Founders discovered in their theoretical compromise called the Declaration, understanding God to be both personal and relational, as well as both the God of nature and the God of the Bible, comes closer to the whole truth about who we are – in that sense less heretical – than the understanding that governed either party to the compromise. Privileging legislative compromise over high principle need not be at the expense of the truth. It's just a realistic recognition that American heresies or American factions all fall short of capturing the whole truth about who we are as persons "hardwired," so to speak, to be free and relational – as well as willing and loving–persons open to the truth.

### **Heretyckie kompromisy: przypadkowy tomizm Ameryki**

Artykuł podejmuje problem tożsamości Amerykanów, jej źródeł, znaczenia kompromisu filozoficznego i politycznego w ramach konstytucjonalizmu amerykańskiego i specyficznej roli pełnionej przez religię w kulturze amerykańskiej. Autor omawia ułożenie tych zjawisk w obecnym dyskursie dotyczącym wojen kulturowych.