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8-3-2007

August 3, 2007: The Failure of Secularism

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Title: The Failure of Secularism

Date: 2007-08-03T07:56:00.000-04:00

8/3/2007--In 2006, Hent de Vries and Lawrence Sullivan published *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*.^[1] In the book, several scholars tried to come to terms with a new political/religious reality—that the Enlightenment effort to relegate religion to the private sphere seemed to have ground to a halt. The same recognition constituted the shared starting point for then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and the German political philosopher Jürgen Habermas in their 2004 debate concerning the moral foundations of the liberal state. And, I must say, my own book, *American Religious Democracy*,^[2] is also part of this growing recognition of an altered relationship between religion and public life. The change is not so much a reinvigoration of institutional religion, nor a lessening of secularization itself. Rather, what has come into question is whether a genuinely religion-free public life is possible or desirable. We are beginning to see that the answer is no. Something has happened to secularism. A number of thinkers are now questioning a separation of religion and public life that had been taken for granted. Further, it is not necessarily just public life in which religion is receiving new attention. Perhaps secular life has not generated human satisfaction in private life either. *Hallowed Secularism* is an alternative to a failed secularism. But in the next few posts, I will be setting forth the failure of our current secularism. Then I will turn to the more positive alternative.^[1] Fordham University Press (November 15, 2006).^[2] (Praeger 2007).