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11-15-2008

November 15, 2008: Pope Benedict's Healthy Secularity

Bruce Ledewitz

Duquesne University, ledewitz@duq.edu

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Repository Citation

Ledewitz, B. (2008). November 15, 2008: Pope Benedict's Healthy Secularity. Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism/214>

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Title: Pope Benedict's Healthy Secularity

Date: 2008-11-15T07:03:00.002-05:00

11/15/2008--According to media reports, Pope Benedict this week called for a "healthy secularity" in public life. While the Pope is particularly concerned with the role of religion in a quite secular Europe, we in America have to come to grips with precisely the same question: just what is a "healthy secularity"? The project of Hallowed Secularism is one attempt to do exactly that for nonbelievers. But the matter can be looked at as a question of deep public policy under the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses of the Constitution. A healthy secularity is one that does not choose among institutional religions or between religion and certain forms of secularism. It does, however, stand against nihilism, materialism and postmodern humanism in the name of objective meaning and justice in history. It openly encourages belief in this common core both by those persons who belong to churches and those who do not, those who believe in God and those who do not. It does not fear the use of traditional religious symbols, such as the word God, to express this common core, as long as it is clear that these symbols are not being used to prefer any one form of belief. I hope that a call such as this for a healthy secularity might cut through the pro and anti religion debate that some secularists think is a crucial issue in the world.