

Duquesne University

Duquesne Scholarship Collection

Hallowed Secularism

The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian
Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly
Excellence and Professor of Law

9-12-2009

September 12, 2009: More Pope Benedict on Religious Certainty in Politics

Bruce Ledewitz

Duquesne University, ledewitz@duq.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism>



Part of the [Constitutional Law Commons](#), and the [Law and Philosophy Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Ledewitz, B. (2009). September 12, 2009: More Pope Benedict on Religious Certainty in Politics. Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism/333>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly Excellence and Professor of Law at Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Hallowed Secularism by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection. For more information, please contact beharyr@duq.edu.

Title: More Pope Benedict on Religious Certainty in Politics

Date: 2009-09-12T19:16:00.001-04:00

9/12/2009—This quotation is from the book *Many Religions—One Covenant: Israel, the Church and the World*, which was published in 1999 in English, before Benedict became Pope. He is discussing the proper role of religion in political life (at page 101): “Of course our efforts on behalf of peace, justice, and the protection of creation are of the highest importance, and religion should doubtlessly provide a vehicle for substantial action in this regard. But the religions have no a priori knowledge of what serves peace here and now, or of how social justice can be built within and between states, or of how creation can best be protected and cultivated out of a sense of responsibility to the Creator. All these things must be worked out rationally and on an individual basis. This always requires free debate between differing opinions and respect for different paths. Often this pluralism of paths cannot be resolved, and if the wearying rational debate is cut short by a religiously motivated moralism that declares one path to be the only right one, religion is perverted into an ideological dictatorship, with a totalitarian passion that does not build peace but destroys it.” Notice that Benedict is here discussing all of “the religions”, not just Christianity. All religions apparently have this tendency to political imperialism and all religions lack the wherewithal to define programs in social life. All religions risk moralism when they try. C.S. Lewis said something similar: religion tells us the goal while politics tells us how. Undoubtedly both right and left are guilty of too direct an appeal to religion. But, right now, I am hearing how God does not want a public option. It is just ridiculous.