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Introducing *Politics and Religion*

With this issue, we proudly launch a new journal, *Politics and Religion*, under the auspices of the Religion and Politics section of the American Political Science Association. It is our hope that, without losing its focus on the politics of religion, the journal will attract submissions across a wide array of disciplines, including (in alphabetical order) Anthropology, History, Law, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Religious Studies, and Sociology. We also hope to publish articles dealing with all religious traditions, and, although four of the five articles in this issue focus on the United States, we look forward to publishing works dealing also with issues in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and other parts of the world.

A generation ago, there were doubts raised about the place of religion in politics. People asked, what does religion have to do with politics? Indeed, the notion that religion was 'the private affair of the individual' – a formula widely used in the communist world – had also become widespread in the non-communist industrialized West, where, in addition, some social scientists shared the communists' certainty that religion was in decline. But world religions have proven more durable and also more political than at least some scholars were prepared to concede some 40 years ago.

The reasons for this are not hard to find. Religion meets fundamental human needs for group solidarity, identification with a broader community, ritual, and moral doctrines. But religious bodies inexorably want to see the moral values embodied in these doctrines protected in society, and therefore become engaged in efforts to shape the laws of the land to fit their moral doctrines. Competition for conversions and more general interconfessional mistrust add to the politicization of religion.

This issue includes some insightful pieces across a broad range of topics. John W. Ayers and C. Richard Hofstetter provide a detailed analysis of the political participation of Muslims in the United States after 9/11. They find generally high levels of participation among American Muslims, with apparently conflicting effects of religion on such political activity. While religious *belief* appears to inhibit political participation, religious activity provides sources of social capital which enhance active citizenship.

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Alexandre Christoyannopoulos offers an account of Leo Tolstoy's analysis of the Sermon on the Mount, and suggests that Tolstoy's exegesis has relevance for contemporary international politics. Indeed, Christoyannopoulos argues that contemporary Christianity need not be a participant in the "clash of civilizations," but has a universal, prophetic role to play in political discourse.

In the subsequest piece Paul A. Djupe and Jacob R. Neiheisel use a survey from a single, pivotal state in U.S. politic, Ohio, to examine the effects of social context and political structure on support for the Christian Right in American politics. Djupe and Neiheisel show that contextual variables matter a great deal, and may provide an explanation of why relatively few citizens whose opinions coincide with positions taken by the Christian Right come to identify with the movement itself.

From a more historical and theoretical standpoint, Andrew Murphy contrasts "constraining" and "progressive" jeremiads in American political rhetoric. Murphy argues that "constraining" jeremiads limit the range of acceptable political visions in U.S. society, while the "progressive" style is more conducive to expansive views of the potential applications of core American values.

Elizabeth Oldmixon and William Hudson examine the behavior of Catholic members of the U.S. House of Representatives with respect to issues relevant to Catholic social teachings. The authors find generally higher levels of support for Catholic positions among Catholic legislators, as well as substantial variation among Catholic House members.

Finally, Book Review Editors Andrew Murphy and Laura Olson have provided a fascinating and eclectic set of book reviews. These include a perceptive essay by George Ehrhardt on religion and Japanese politics.

Thus, the first issue of *Politics and Religion* contains a wide range of conceptual, methodological, and substantive approaches. We are quite pleased with the context of the first issue, and we are confident that *Politics and Religion* is well on the way to becoming a primary outlet for scholars whose research interests lie at the intersection of the political and the sacred.

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