

The Inseparability of Religion and Politics

To presume that religion and civility can be, need to be, independent of each other is folly, false and fatally hurtful. Both have common aspects that are essential to common wellbeing; in these commonalities, religion and politics share identity. Identity is in aspects of meaning and universal purpose, what pertain to self/ social governance, behavior, and affirmation of personal authenticity.

While religious culture can and should be open to diversity, there are certain universal truths of human relationship that should be affirmed in all religious cultures. Universality implicates worldview consciousness that corresponds with informed science, with understandings and behavior that serves universal wellbeing and preserves eco-social necessities.

The way of expressing and affirming religious culture is something that needs to be open to personal conscience and creativity, thus, it is wise that politics endorse no one religion even as it remains open to all cultures of authentic religious expression—which pertains to universal human rights. Political ambition motivated in self-interest is irreligious. Religion supposes right self-understanding in relationships with other, and accommodation of self to other in universal interests; authentic politics even-handedly works to secure personal/ social commonalities.

Civil/ religious commonalities apply to everyone in self-governance and interpersonal relationships. These universal commonalities are religious and political for they pertain to social order and essential wellbeing. Political/ moral awareness surfaces in experiences of good/ bad outcomes of interpersonal behavior. Self-reflection and communication with others lead to accommodation of universal insights. Selfish interest tends toward ego-focus and lack of even mindedness with respect to common interests. Herein is the cause of social conflict and religious tyranny. Because interests are in common (universal and personal) the opportunity for conflicts between individual selves (and groups) with each other surfaces. The common sense of religion and civility requires sensible accommodation.

Collective wisdom (faith understanding) is the continuing composition of cumulative experience and insight. The discovery of selfhood and essential social interdependency is new to every individual. The iterations of personal experience are conditioned by evolving consciousness in changing times. Individual life-experience and the imprint of changing experience enlarge the common treasure of universal spirituality, collective wisdom. Creation isn't time-limited, it's happening all the time.

Evolution is a transformative process of continuous (spiritual/ material) creation. The vested fixations of religions in presumed absolutes (non-evolving creation) assume the theology of dominion and hierarchical (patriarchy) ecclesiology. Openness to evolution, to ongoing creation, is threatening to centrist theology/ ecclesiology. Dominion culture and patriarchal ecclesiology premised in unchanging absolutes do not accommodate evolution's transformational worldview. It is important for theology and ecclesiology to accommodate to open science if cultural violence rooted in closed ideologies is to be resolved. Religions cause wars; this fact exposes the lie of fixation in ideologies. How can religions credibly cling to closed ideologies that cause wars and interpersonal violence? Religions are credible to the extent that they enable civility.

The greedy pursuit of personal advantage over other is religious/ political prostitution for it makes obsessive claim on common gifts of life that belong to all. The ego-centric pursuit of personal gain at the expense of other puts one in a collision course with common wellbeing, true religion and public interest politics.

Except religion is politically meaningful, it is inauthentic. Except politics are religiously meaningful, they are inauthentic. Because religious vision fails, political vision fails. Religion/ politics necessarily implicate self-understanding in right relationship with all life, especially, persons respecting each other. Politics are about the art of civil living, religion is about moral living, the basis of civil living. The axiom of reciprocity applies, i.e., "civility supposes morality (religion) as morality supposes civility." Each depends on the other.

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