



Religion in the Public Square: The Place of Religious Convictions in Political Debate (Point/Counterpoint: Philosophers Debate Contemporary Issues)

By Nicholas Wolterstorff, Robert Audi



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This vigorous debate between two distinguished philosophers presents two views on a topic of worldwide importance: the role of religion in politics. Audi argues that citizens in a free democracy should distinguish religious and secular considerations and give them separate though related roles. Wolterstorff argues that religious elements are both appropriate in politics and indispensable to the vitality of a pluralistic democracy. Each philosopher first states his position in detail, then responds to and criticizes the opposing viewpoint.



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Editorial Review

Review

An extremely valuable contribution on the place of religious ideas in our country's political life. . . . Clearly written and accessible . . . this book will greatly enrich both those seeking an introduction to the place of religious conviction in political life and those who have already engaged that troubling subject. (Kent Greenwalt, Columbia University Law School *The Philosophical Review*)

Robert Audi and Nicholas Wolterstorff are two of the most thoughtful voices in the contemporary debate about the proper role of religion in politics. Their book, *Religion In The Public Square*, makes an important contribution. I recommend it highly. (Michael J. Perry, Northwestern University)

The book presents two sides to the question of the role of religion in the public square. Both positions are well argued, informed and clearly presented. While the book's clarity makes it an excellent source for an undergraduate course, it does such a good job of bringing out key issues that it stands as a contribution to an understanding of the foundations of liberal democracy valuable in its own right. (Jacqueline Marina, Purdue University *APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy, September 1998*)

Audi and Wolterstorff have provided us with a robust exchange, one that is accessible to a wide audience yet sophisticated enough to appeal to specialists in the field. As political theorists and philosophers continue to take up these issues, they would be wise to turn to this text for guidance on how to understand these questions from the perspective of contemporary philosophers of religion. (Brett T. Wilmot, Chicago, Illinois *The Journal Of Religion*)

Singly and by their disagreements, Audi and Wolterstorff show how complex is the issue of what role religious convictions may play in the public life of liberal democracies. Their debate is itself a model of the richer political discussion our society needs. (Charles Larmore, Columbia University)

Anyone wanting a deeper understanding of the philosophical issues at stake in the debate between liberal neutrality and faith-based morality needs to study this book carefully. (*Ethics and Medicine*)

The book is of a model clarity, careful thinking, and reasoned dialogue. It makes a valuable contribution to the religion and liberalism debate. (*Religious Studies Review*)

Audi and Wolterstorff demonstrate the complex realities surrounding religious and political arguments concerning the need for a consistent ethical rationale for determining the proper presence of religious principles in political debate. Their arguments highlight the contemporary dialogue between political liberalism and theologically based responses. (*Andrews University Seminary Studies*)

This book is a carefully reasoned and temperate discussion on both sides. It deserves to be read by all concerned about issues of church and state. (*Terrorism and Political Violence*)

About the Author

Robert Audi is Charles J. Mach Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the University of Nebraska, the author of numerous books and articles, and the editor of "The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy".

Nicholas Wolterstorff is Noah Porter Professor of Philosophical Theology at Yale University and the author of, among other books, "Divine Discourse" and "John Locke and the Ethics of Belief".

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