# Introduction he insists that it is possible



# Introduction

Religion has influenced political decisions for the longest time in various states and vice versa. This has created an interesting relationship between the two actors whose weight is felt across governmental fronts, religious communities, pressure groups and political parties (Jevtic 63-64).

This paper looks at the arguments for and against keeping religion in politics according to Sweetman's study.

# **Arguments for keeping religion out of politics**

According to the study carried out by Sweetman (pp. 115), there are about eight arguments on why politics and religion should not mix. Religious beliefs are viewed as irrational and therefore do not form a strong basis on which politics can be linked to. They are seen to defy the US constitution and this makes them dangerous since the public square must always remain neutral.

The reason why religion must be kept out of politics is that it persuades people to subscribe to that religious experience and not all do so as some are atheists by choice. In addition, some people view religious arguments as inferior and this further discredits their inclusion in politics (pp. 121). Religion is also seen to lack an adequate basis to be used in liberal democracy and it seems inappropriate to base politics on other people's revelations. On the other hand, arguments introduced by believers are seen to undermine the freedoms of non-believers and a good example is the issue on whether to legalize abortion and euthanasia among other controversial issues.

This brings in a conflict between the church and the state as the church is pro-life whereas the state could opt otherwise. Political decisions thus made would impact negatively on religion as they defy what is appealing to it. However, Sweetman (pp. 128) shows the important role played by religion in politics citing that the secular arguments are not convincing enough to rule out the religious arguments. He sees the religious arguments as rational enough to stand firm against the provided secular arguments and in this regard, religion has a right to voice its opinions on the aforementioned issues of euthanasia and abortion among others.

Life is a precious gift from God and no one has a right to take it away apart from Him (pp. 141). The secular arguments could therefore only be meaningful if those who coin them can be able to convince the religious fraternity satisfactorily that their arguments fall short. This Sweetman sees as impossible since he views the religious arguments on its inclusion in politics as rational and weighty enough to win the case. Secular arguments are too worldly and materialistic to form a solid argument against religion and that is the reason why they can never be taken as default. God can never be ruled out and neither can the existence of human beings and that is why secular arguments appear inferior. In a debate scenario, secularist arguments take a back seat since they are hard to spot as compared to the religious arguments that feature prominently (pp.

158).

## Conclusion

According to this study, it is evident that Sweetman answers the question of why religion must be included in politics persuasively. He discredits the secularist arguments citing that God cannot be ignored and this is the stand taken by arguments against the inclusion of religion in politics. He insists that it is possible for the secularists to have a spiritual life despite their stand on religion and this adds weight to the argument on why politics needs religion (pp. 63).

### Works cited

Jevtic, Miroljub. "Political Science and Religion." Politics and Religion Journal, 1 (2007): 63-64.

Print. Sweetman, Brendan. Why politics needs religion: the place of religious arguments in the public. USA: Intervarsity Press, 2006. Print.