Religion and its effects on globalization

Economics, Globalization

To be successful today, enterprises must now manage products and services, customer contact, delivery, and supply-chain management in real time; all on a networking-centric fabric with customer demand for anytime, anywhere access to information and services leading the charge. People around the world understand the importance of informationtechnologyand accept the fact that it is here to stay. This sudden expansion in the computer field created a pool of occupations that were open, yet unable to be filled by the current workforce.

Not dealing directly with the IT worker shortage threatens not only the growth of the IT industry, but also the growth of the entire U. S. economy and our global competitiveness. U. S. will soon lack a supply of qualified core IT workers, such as computer scientists and engineers, systems analysts, and computer programmers. Since the shortage of IT workers is becoming a global problem, U. S. employers will face tough competition to hire and keep highly skilled IT employees. Introduction

The world's religions have been instrumental in shaping virtually all aspects of human experience and human perceptions. Certainly, religion played an important role in the development and the ongoing support of democratic principles. One can even go so far as to say that it was because of the determination engendered by religious faith that democracy was first founded in the modern world as religious refugees sought out a new land to worship as they believed they should. Religion has also been at the core of many of the world's most horrific wars.

Whether the jihads of the Middle East, the battles in Northern Ireland, or the ancient Crusaded, war has often been predicated on religion. In addition, there are many religious people, especially those who think of themselves as traditionalists, who are deeply skeptical about democracy. Democracy, in this view, is one of a horde of pernicious doctrines that modernity unleashed in its attack on religious truth. All that can be examined empirically is the fact that modern democracy, not that of the Athens of Socrates' time, the democracy of the past two and a half centuries, is one that found its roots in the belief that all people have the right to believe as they will and that a nation must support that simple fact. Historically Most modern Americans have come to think of democracy as rather " old hat. " In reality, democracy is as fearlessly new today as when it was first proposed. " If it does not have to be reinvented, it certainly has to be rethought, by every generation.

Today there is a particular urgency about rethinking democracy in relation to its moral and religious grounding" (Neuhaus 87). Yet in terms of relative time in the larger course of human history, democracy is a relatively new idea and ideal. Assuming that people have a right to determine their own future, actions, faith, and government stems, in great part, from the understanding that a higher power, God, prophet, or spiritual leader has led them to understand that they are creatures who choose their path – what is often called " free agency. Judeo-Christian faith has established a foundation for Western democracy in its stories of the Bible's Old and New Testaments of attacks by both law and prophets on the absolute power of rulers, the demands for redress for the poor and oppressed, and the exposing of self-interest in every kind of human system. The Christian revelation showed

theequalityof all in the sight of God and a vision of the Kingdom of God ruled by love not compulsion, strengthening the call for justice and for compassion for the weak.

The Hebrew texts' and the Bible's emphases on opposing political and social oppression, and on the religious fellowship that bound communities were taken up strongly in Europe, Britain, and North America. The First Amendment of the U. S. Constitution's " Religion Clause" consists of two provisions. One forbids the " establishment" of a religion, and the other guarantees the " free exercise" of religion. The " no establishment" provision is in the service of the " free exercise" provision and suggests (or demands) that religion not be created by the state in behalf of the state.

Of course, individual Americans have created new religions throughout the past two hundred years. Free exercise is the end, and no establishment is one means in the service of that end. This understanding of the Religion Clause has not always prevailed in our jurisprudence. Indeed, in recent years, the courts have frequently acted as though " no establishment" is the end, and in the service of that end they have officially decreased what many think of as the free exercise of religion in the public sphere.

Recent news stories regarding the judge who wants the Biblical Ten Commandments hanging in his courtroom, or the stories requiring that municipal " holiday" displays reflect a multiplicity of beliefs. Philosophically Religion and politics have always had a turbulent history together. Religion and democratic politics have even more difficulty coexisting, because the former suggests an unyielding body of law, an peremptory understanding of

what is right and what is wrong, and a clear knowledge of the direction that should be followed by the government.

The fundamental precept of democracy suggests a much more relativistic approach. Democracy attempts to allow for laws that can be changed, a sense that the majority should determine what is right and what is wrong (and, correspondingly, when the majority changes or evolves the determination of what is right and what is wrong will also change), and a much more flexible idea of directions that should be followed by the state (Mahler 601).

There has been a great deal of concern voiced throughout the last half of the 20th century that religion is declining worldwide and secularism is advancing. As modernity spreads, secularism spreads in its wake. The high degree of religious involvement with politics in the United States is said to be the dying gasp of religious forces that are using politics in an effort to postpone their demise. Early advocates of the secularization of modern society were those responsible for forming a large core of nineteenth-century European thought.

Karl Marx was sure that class struggle and the triumph of communism would become the tale ofmodern life, while religion would soon be a mercifully finished chapter. Max Weber believed that in modernity's wake the mighty forces of rationalism and bureaucratization would defeat religion, if not entirely eliminate the religious. Sigmund Freud hoped that " the future of an illusion" would prove poor as people saw that the modern world gave them a

chance to be free of religion and, ostensibly, free from personal tyranny, guilt, and fearfulness.

Islam and Democracy It is important to look at faiths outside of the Judeo-Christian traditions in any discussion regarding the impact of religion on democracy. Islam serves as one of the best examples of the ways in which a religion has discouraged the formation of democracies and democratic political structures. The extent to which democracy and Islam are mutually exclusive has been tested empirically with implications for conflict in civilization and the prospects for democratic peace.

Three measures of democracy were used in a study published in 1998: a political rights index, an index of liberal democracy, and a measure based on institutionalization (Midlarsky 485). The measure of democratic institutionalization behaves in a manner intermediate between the other two and shows that the likelihood of conflict is based on the likelihood indoctrinated negative attitudes directed at the non-Islam organization or nation. Politics in Muslim states have always been strongly influenced by religion.

And yet, concern about the expansion and impact of religiously inspired politics is widespread, and the demise of communism has turned Islamism into what is perceived as the most dangerous enemy of liberal democracy However, issues such as the threats posed by an Islamic form of government on democracy and the use of religion to promote social and political justice continue to be debated throughout the world. The fact that debate takes

place should speak well of the inclusion of some democratic principles as part of modern life regardless of religious belief or affiliation.

An important factor to be considered is that the assumption of the moral correctness of one's religion or the religion of an entire people has often led to the out-of-hand condemnation of other cultures, nations, and governments. That condemnation is often what then leads to religious-based battles and wars. The Modern Realm It is a common belief that religious fundamentalism--the appeal for a return to the literal reading of a holy text and its application to politics and society--is a major threat to democracy.

In a democracy, people are supposed to treat each other as equals and with mutualrespect. The most traditional and classic definition of the democratic life is that citizens have or should have equal public standing. However, the ancient texts of most faiths outline strong laws and constraints on individuals. In recent years there have been calls by religious leaders and politicians alike to return to such literal interpretations and definitions of right and wrong.

But in a democracy, the state recognizes the integrity of the church, not simply as a voluntary association of individuals, but as a communal bearer of the witness to a higher sovereignty from which, through the consent of the governed, the legitimacy of the state itself is derived. That understanding is what allows for the multi-culturalism and diversity that is inherent in a democracy. Religion is not what has defined democracy just as democracy has certainly not defined religion.

Democracy, at least in the United States, is still a spiritual concept in that the majority of Americans believe that vision of a society based on two fundamental beliefs. " The first is that all men, created equal in the eyes of God with certain unalienable rights, are free to pursue the longings of their hearts. The second belief is that the sole purpose of government is to protect those rights. The first Americans shared this deeply spiritual vision. Most Americans still do " (Reed 26).

For more than 200 years, the people of the United States have pursued the vision of a " faithful" democracy, maintaining a firm foundation, and achieved greatness by honoring God and welcoming people of all faith into public life. Perhaps, such a statement can serve as an example of how religion and democracy truly interact – as mutually supportive concepts both based on fundamental perceptions of the meaning of truth in human life. That is one of the great privileges of democracy and one part of the foundation of faith.