View metadata, citation and similar papers at core.ac.uk
brought to you by CORE
provided by Purdue E-Pubs

2015 John Dewey Lecture

What We Can Teach When We Teach (About) Religion

Larry A. Hickman

Abstract

Given the increasing diversity of religious beliefs and outlooks in the United States, John Dewey's proposals regarding "a common faith" can help educators provide the tools for their students to think critically about these and other issues related to the changing religious landscape. Particular attention is given to three groups of students: those who are adherents of dogmatic or exclusivist religious communities; those who share the belief that no legitimate value judgments about religious faith are possible; and those religiously unaffiliated students who feel excluded from the possibility of religious faith.

Let me begin by thanking the society's officers: President Kathleen Knight-Abowitz, President-Elect Len Waks, immediate past President Deron Boyles, Secretary-Treasurer Kyle Greenwalt, membership and development officer Mark Kissling, and of course student liaison Matt Ryg and webmaster Zane Wubbena. I know that their many efforts on behalf of this society are much appreciated by all of us.

In 1955, when Will Herberg published his influential book, *Protestant–Catholic–Jew*, it could be said with some confidence that an essay in American religious sociology could claim exhaustive coverage by restricting its analysis to those three faiths. Scarcely a decade later, however, that formula would be obsolescent. The 1960s saw the rise of what José Casanova, glossing Thomas Luckmann, termed religions "of self expression and self-realization along with the triumph of the therapeutic."[1] Thirty years further on, the 1990s gave us "pastoral care of the soul as big business" and the rejection of organized religion in favor of ecumenical spirituality. Americans were offered a new category, "spiritual but not religious."[2]

Since that time, the religious profile of America, never simple, has become even more complex. The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life reports that "more than one quarter (28%) of American adults have left the faith in which they were raised in favor of another religion—or no religion at all. If change in affiliation from one type of Protestantism to another is included, roughly 44% of adults have either switched religious affiliation, moved from being unaffiliated with any religion to being affiliated with a particular faith, or dropped any connection to a specific religious tradition

altogether."[3] In its 2012 survey, Pew reports that some 19% of Americans claimed no religious affiliation. Among those who describe themselves as politically liberal, that figure is in the neighborhood of 40% and trending upward. Further, "among Americans ages 18–29, one in three say they are not currently affiliated with any particular religion."[4]

This complex picture, coupled with the fact that our students may also bring their religious backgrounds as Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, or Wiccans to our classrooms, provokes a consideration of my topic: What we can teach when we teach (about) religion.

Given the dogmatism and exclusivity of some contemporary forms of religious belief, for example, how can the religious experiences of our students be liberated so that they can travel along broader avenues? Given the fact that we are now living in what is increasingly becoming a culturally rich and highly pluralistic society, how can we help our students assess whether some forms of religious belief are better adapted than others to these new circumstances? Is it possible for us and our fellow Americans, despite our many individual and cultural differences, to share a common faith? If so, what form would that type of faith take? And how can we help our students develop the tools they will need to think critically about these questions, which are all the more difficult because they are both intensely personal and profoundly public?

More specifically, I want to focus on these questions with three very different groups of students in mind. Although these groups are not exhaustive, they do tend to cut across the religious (and nonreligious) affiliations that are reflected in the Pew studies.

The first group includes those who share the beliefs of dogmatic and exclusivist religious communities. The second group includes those who share the belief that now there is only deferral and difference—that commonality among humans is ephemeral and that legitimate value judgments about religious faith and practice are elusive. The third group includes those who feel that because they are not affiliated with any religious community, they are therefore excluded from the possibility of religious faith.

It is important to note that the issue I am addressing is closely related to, but significantly distinct from, controversies regarding how the Bible can be taught in public schools. Nevertheless, in their excellent empirical study of that issue, *For the Civic Good: The Liberal Case for Teaching Religion in the Public Schools*, Walter Feinberg and Richard A. Layton have provided a set of tools that can be useful for our present purposes. First, they are careful to distinguish constitutional legitimacy from educational legitimacy. As to the former, constitutional legitimacy, they cite the influential Supreme Court decision in the case of Lemon v. Kurtzman (1971) regarding the constitutionality of government legislation in the sphere of religion. Chief Justice Warren Burger delineated the following three-part test: "First, the statute must have a secular legislative purpose; second, its principal or primary effect must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion; finally, the statute must not foster 'excessive entanglement with religion.'"[5]

If constitutional legitimacy tends to be restrictive with respect to government, then educational legitimacy can be understood as expansive with respect to the teacher. Feinberg and Layton offer three criteria of educational legitimacy: first, there should be respect based on the obligation of teachers to students; second, there should be inclusiveness based on the obligation of teachers to a democratic public; and third, there should be academic integrity based on the obligation of teachers to their subject matter. These are important considerations that provide a background for thinking about what we can teach when we teach (about) religion.

More specific to my topic, however, I believe that one of the ways we can begin to address the needs of students of the three types I have mentioned is by helping them to understand that evolution, including the evolution of religious beliefs and institutions, is a reality that they do well to take into account if they are to understand their milieu historically, culturally, and socially.

Of course, I need not remind this audience that the question of how (or indeed whether) evolution is to be taught in public schools, colleges, and universities is itself often a subject of contention. In a recent interview, for example, the Governor of Wisconsin, Scott Walker, appeared to be confused about that very issue.[6] But since that matter is outside the scope of what I want to discuss today, I hope you will simply allow me to stipulate that as teachers we have an obligation to educate our students about evolution as both fact and theory whenever the topic is appropriate to our subject matter. In their outstanding essay "Addressing Controversies in Science and Education: A Pragmatic Approach to Evolution Education," David Hildebrand, Kimberly Bilica, and John Capps provide an excellent discussion of this issue that is rich in themes that will be familiar to members of this society, so I am pleased to recommend their study to you.

So as we think about what we can teach when we teach (about) religion, it is important that we emphasize the fact that evolution itself evolves, that is, that what we understand by the evolution of beliefs and practices itself undergoes continual change. Education about religion means that we must encourage our students to reject absolutist facades that deny progress through time, to reject the urge to take refuge in vague varieties of relativism, and also to reject the possibility that religious experience is something that is no longer possible for educated men and women.

Honesty demands that we not blink at the fact that if our students are to understand their place in our rapidly changing world, then it is inevitable that some systems of religious belief be understood as more evolved than others. By this I mean that some are better adapted than others to the demands of life in our rapidly changing environment.

There are many productive ways to address this issue. One way is to start from historical accounts and taxonomies. Robert Bellah, for example, has proposed that we think historically; he offers five stages: (1) the primitive-aboriginal stage, (2) the archaic stage of ancient Greece, (3) the historical stage of Roman Catholicism, (4) the early modern stage of Protestantism, and (5) the modern stage of meditative and integrative religions.[7]

Even given its apparent Eurocentric bias, this schema can serve as a tool for opening up fruitful classroom discussions, since it opens the door in stage five for consideration of non-Western religions such as Buddhism. Other taxonomies track progress from less to more evolved forms in terms of ontological commitments, organizational structures, commitment to ecumenical values, and so on. The use of these historical accounts and taxonomies in no way commits us either to rigid hierarchies or to a lazy ecumenism that attempts to prop itself up on an everything-is-of-equal-value reading of important studies in comparative religion. Properly employed, these taxonomies can stimulate rich, productive discussions about the relative value of various forms of religious expression within the context of the problems and prospects that our students face.

It is also important to remind our students that just as is often the case with biological evolution, newer forms of religious expression and institutions are not by that very fact more evolved. In his Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *God: A Biography*, for example, Jack Miles suggests that the idea we find in the Hebrew Bible—especially in the books of Genesis and Job—that one can argue with God (and in the case of Job, that one can even take the moral high ground) is much more richly evolved than some of the aspects of the *via negativa* of medieval Latin Christianity.[8] In terms of my wider point, the *via negativa* constituted a move in theology from process to stasis, whereas we know that evolutionary thinking has generally moved in the opposite direction, from the stasis of fixed species to models that take process into account.

It would, however, be a mistake to take this point as praise for Judaism over Christianity in general. That would not be possible in any event, given the fact that the terms *Judaism* and *Christianity* designate a wide range of beliefs within their respective communities. The point instead would be to initiate a discussion of the relative role of human agency and competing concepts of the self within the various strands of the two religious traditions.

Good pedagogy dictates that we assess the ways that religious institutions accommodate themselves to existing environments, as well as the ways that they seek to alter those environments. To claim that we cannot follow these changes through time, to claim that we cannot assess their value with respect to certain universalizable values such as tolerance, charity, the promotion of emotional well-being, and the growth of individuals and communities, to name a few, would not just be to block the way to inquiry: it would strike at the heart of the educational process itself.

A corollary of this point is that not all existing contexts of religious beliefs and practices are created equal. It is undeniable, for example, that we are now experiencing the strong pull of globalizing tendencies. During the coming decades we will be living ever more intimately with peoples and institutions that are quite different from us and our own. It behooves us and our students to find successful ways of doing so. Measured against this larger, *global*, cultural context, then, it makes no sense at all to say that the *local* cultural context of the caste system that supports

the strand of Hinduism that defends abuse of the Dalits (or "untouchables") is as evolved as the democratic cultural context that supports those strands of value-creating Buddhism that promote equality across lines of class, relative affluence, gender, and sexual orientation.

About such matters we must be clear for all of our students, regardless of whether they attempt to retreat behind exclusivist religious dogma, or assert with the confidence of privilege that no particular vantage point is privileged over any other, or think that the possibility of religious faith is closed to them because of their lack of institutional affiliation.

In short, it is essential that we prepare the ground for teaching our students that some religious expressions are more evolved than others, and by that I mean that they are better adapted to the needs of human growth and the opportunities of our changing global circumstances.

Now, there will inevitably be members of exclusivist religious groups who will object that any educator who follows the path that I have just described, who practices what we might call a pragmatist pedagogy, will be guilty of his or her own form of proselytizing on behalf of the religion of "secular humanism." I have experienced this argument in my own classrooms. This is how it runs: first premise: the critical, pragmatist pedagogy of religion of the type I am describing is a form of secular humanism; second premise: secular humanism is religion by another name; conclusion: it must therefore follow that to advance a critical pragmatist pedagogy of religion is to proselytize for one particular religion at the expense of others. Q. E. D.

There are several ways to respond to this type of argument. First, there is the law. As Feinberg and Layton have pointed out, "the courts have . . . affirmed that exposure of students to ideas and values that may be at odds with their own firmly held religious beliefs does not constitute disapproval of religion or establishment of an alleged religious perspective, such as 'secular humanism.'"[9]

Second, it is easy enough to draw a bright line of sharp distinction between proselytizing, on one side, and free and open inquiry, on the other. Generally speaking, proselytizing tends to occur in contexts or settings that many regard as inappropriate; it tends to be insensitive to cultural and individual backgrounds, it begins and ends with positions that are intransigent and dogmatic, and it often involves behavior that is aggressive.

The pragmatist pedagogy I am describing takes pains to develop appropriate contexts for discussion. It insists that all parties be sensitive to the cultural and individual backgrounds of all discussants. It ensures that discussions remain non-dogmatic and open to new ideas. It avoids aggressive behavior by carefully managing discussions in ways that maximize respect.

Whether we call this type of pedagogy pragmatist or not is of little importance. It can have various names. It draws on the *discourse ethics* advanced by Juergen Habermas as a basis for democratic life. It resonates with what Richard

Bernstein has termed a *democratic ethos*: in which an engaged pluralism is at once agonistic and discursive; in which consensus is neither a presupposition nor a goal; in which the most diverse perspectives are welcomed; and in which there is a genuine willingness to listen, "to really listen and to hear what the other is saying, to use one's imagination to understand what may initially strike one as alien and even repugnant."[10]

We may wish to call this type of education *critical*, or *humanist*, or *liberal*, or *democratic,* or something similar. I have chosen to call it *pragmatist* because of its intimate connection to the work of John Dewey. But I believe that each of these names is appropriate to an educational practice that sets out the terms and conditions for unhindered discussions that include respect, tolerance, civility, open minds, generosity of spirit, and fair treatment across lines of gender, class, race, and sexual orientation. I submit that attacks on educational practice of this type are not simply attacks on democratic processes; they are also attacks on the experimental methods of the physical and social sciences.

It is important to be clear on this matter: pragmatist educational practice advances arm-in-arm with the methods of the sciences. Once we begin to assess religious beliefs and practices in terms of their functional roles within their cultural contexts, the implications tend to penetrate deeply into economic issues such as the feminization of poverty; public health issues, and issues that involve environmental sustainability. These are areas in which there are reliable, experimentally obtained data—data that allow us to transcend dogma and that provide the basis for intelligent, informed classroom discussions of religious belief and practice.

It is also important to remind ourselves that just as is the case with biological evolution, older and newer institutional forms often exist side by side, even within religious communities that share the same name. Examples are plentiful: in terms of gender issues, public health, and economic development, the fundamentalist Islam of the tribal regions of Pakistan can only be regarded as atavistic when compared to the religious pluralism of more moderate (and more advanced) forms of Islam, such as those practiced by the Turkish Sufis. To take another example, in certain parts of Southeast Asia, despite the crystal clear message of the Buddha regarding idolatry, there are still religious people who claim to follow the teachings of Shakymuni but continue to live in a world populated by invisible spirits that must be placated, that constitute a drag on economic development, and that are the occasion for ethnic strife.[11]

The point that can be drawn from the discussion thus far, I hope, is the salutary effect of a pragmatist approach to educating about religion that stresses developmental trends in religious beliefs and institutions, all the while avoiding hard and fast taxonomies. My suggestions follow the trails blazed by John Dewey and William James. I am suggesting that we can teach our students that when religion is understood as a *function* of human life rather than as a set of *ontological or ideological commitments*, they will be more likely to understand their own beliefs

and practices, as well as those of their fellow global citizens half a world away, and consequently more capable of making informed decisions about their own religious commitments, or absence thereof.

I call this a pragmatist pedagogy because I am suggesting that we encourage our students to look at what a particular religious expression *does*—how it functions—in the realms of ethics, aesthetics, politics, and the technosciences, for example, and this from the perspective of a world that is shrinking day by day as its networks of communication become more extensive and complex. I am suggesting that we encourage our students to consider how forms of religious expression function in their local environments, as well as within the broader context of the forces that are propelling globalization and in terms of those universalizable values that have been developed over time, such as those appearing in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Citizens of our world community will have many opportunities and, indeed, many incentives, to tailor their religious beliefs and institutions to their own needs and interests, rather than just automatically accept those of the communities into which they are born and nurtured. The results of the Pew surveys that I cited at the beginning of my presentation surely support this claim. I am convinced that the pragmatism of John Dewey and William James can help us develop a pedagogy to match the challenges of this situation, even though their accounts differ in important respects.

For William James, religious belief is in some sense universal. Religious belief is ultimately, in his view, a hedge against nihilism. But the particular form religious belief takes is for him ultimately a matter of cultural background and personal temperament.

The impulse to religious belief, he suggested, comes from what he termed the "more" that is beyond the limits of conscious experience, and most likely a function of the subconscious. He wrote that it involves "some part of the Self unmanifested; and always . . . some power of organic expression in abeyance or reserve."[12] This "more" is a "subconscious continuation of our conscious life."[13] Then, in what can only be described as a deft move, he added that "invasions" from the subconscious realm tend to take on objective appearances, and to give rise to feelings that something outside the organism, perhaps even some personality, is in control of the larger situation, if not destiny itself.

Why is this a deft move? Its force lies in the fact that James was at once laying the groundwork for two essential components of a pragmatist pedagogy of religious experience. First, he was raising the possibility of a naturalized religious experience that can be understood as a part of a common psychological inheritance that is therefore of universal import above sect and creed. But second, and perhaps more important, he was also providing potential cover for the plethora of religious expressions that are attuned to differences in culture and temperament.

He accomplished this second move by introducing the concept of *over beliefs*. “Here,” he wrote, “the prophets of all the different religions come with their visions, voices, raptures, and other openings, supposed by each to authenticate his own peculiar faith.”[14] So it is here that temperament and cultural background are foregrounded, generating vast arrays of belief systems and institutions that ride forth astride this universal psychological “more.”

Looked at from one end, we can see that James detected a sensibility common to all human beings that is rooted in the very nature of our common experiences of the vague, the fringe, and our common sense of our own finitude in an infinitely complex and variable world. But this common sensibility takes on many forms of expression. Looked at from the other end, religious expressions, though richly variegated and complex, are rooted in experiences that are common to all humans, simply because of the ways in which we have evolved with and experience our environing conditions, including those that are social.

By making these moves, James’s implicit claim was that spirituality can be understood in naturalistic terms, as a common feature of human life. But has he not thereby also opened the door to natural, which is to say, nonsupernatural religious belief? Has he not opened the door to religious expressions that are humanistic at their core and in their outlook? Has he not opened the door to the possibilities of religious belief on the part of those of our students who feel themselves excluded from that possibility? Has he not indicated how a bridge of understanding can be constructed between those of our students who are religious exclusivists, those whose primary commitment is to the relativism of deferral and difference, and even those who feel themselves excluded from religious belief because of their lack of institutional affiliation?

In the postscript to *The Varieties*, James did in fact open the door to a type of religious experience that is at once naturalistic, humanistic, and pragmatist. “The practical needs and experiences of religion,” he wrote, “seem to me sufficiently met by the belief that beyond each man and in a fashion continuous with him there exists a larger power which is friendly to him and to his ideals. All that the facts require is that the power should be both other and larger than our conscious selves. Anything larger will do, if only it be large enough to trust for the next step.”[15]

“Why,” he asked, “may not the world be a sort of republican banquet . . . where all the qualities of being respect one another’s personal sacredness, yet sit at the common table of space and time.”[16]

But if James just barely opened the door to a humanistic religious outlook that is capable of serving as a common faith, then John Dewey eagerly flung the door open wide and stepped through it. His little book *A Common Faith*, for example, might even be read as a reply to James. Dewey’s central argument was simple enough, and doubtless familiar to this audience. It is highly relevant to our current globalizing circumstances. He wanted to remind us that there is no such thing as religion in general. There is no single unique property that all religions share. Given

the plethora of possibilities, Dewey suggested, a person cannot choose religion in a generic sense; religion in the generic sense simply does not exist. To choose a religion is to choose a particular outlook on life, a particular set of ideals. Moreover, even if someone remains within the religious community into which he or she was born and nurtured, that nevertheless constitutes a choice.

Dewey's solution to the problem of choosing from among the world's many religions—or else coming to terms with the fact that none of them seem adequate to one's needs—was to propose a common faith. He invited us to turn our attention from the noun *religion* to the adjective *religious*. He argued that religious qualities are capable of permeating many types of experiences, including those that are moral, aesthetic, and even political in nature. What he was after was naturalized forms of religious experience: religious outlooks that are comfortable with the advances of the technosciences, that do not attempt to compete with them regarding the control of facts, and therefore that render supernaturalism a personal rather than a public matter. Because every human being lives, at the very least, in a natural world, these would be forms of religious expression in which every human being could have a share.

"The aims and ideals that move us are generated through imagination," Dewey wrote. "But they are not made out of imaginary stuff. They are made out of the hard stuff of the world of physical and social experience."[17] They involve "rearrangements of existing things." They involve a "process of creation that is experimental and continuous."[18] Dewey's naturalism not only admitted, but celebrated human "spirituality." When he and his colleagues published their collection of essays on philosophical naturalism in 1944, for example, they gave it the title *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*. What they were offering was a form of spirituality that felt very much at home with the technosciences and also with universalizable human values.

But Dewey's common faith was not designed to be what the American Council on Education warned against, namely, a "public school sect, which would take its place alongside existing faiths and compete with them."[19]

So Horace Kallen may have gone a bit too far when he suggested that a democratic faith is "the religion of and for religions . . . [It is] the religion of religions."[20]

Recurring to the excellent work that Feinberg and Layton have done regarding constitutional legitimacy and educational legitimacy, it is essential to recall that pragmatist pedagogy advocates for free and open inquiry and discussion, and not for or against any particular sect or religion. Dewey was not interested in undercutting any particular religious faith. He was, however, interested in the possibility of recasting religious expressions in terms of their naturalistic context, and thereby providing a framework of belief for those who, because they have abandoned religious institutions, have concluded that religious values are thereby closed to them.

Now there might be those who would still object that Dewey was crossing the line of constitutional legitimacy when he raised the possibility that those of his students who felt alienated from religious institutions might nevertheless have religious

experiences. But in a letter dated June 5, 1943, he provided a candid statement of his purpose in writing *A Common Faith* that undercuts objections of this type. He wrote to a U.S. army private named Charles E. Witzell, "I have taught many years and I don't think that any of my students would say that I set out to undermine anyone's faith . . . The lectures making up [*A Common Faith*] were meant for those whose religious beliefs had been abandoned, and who were given the impression that their abandonment left them without any religious beliefs whatever. I wanted to show them that religious values are not a monopoly of any one class or sect and are still open to *them*."[21] In other words, if there are religious qualities of many types of experiences, including our experiences of ideals and ends-in-view, then religious experience is available to everyone, regardless of a lack of institutional affiliation.

But there is something more going on here. James and Dewey were both pragmatists, and one of the central ideas of pragmatism is that the meaning of a concept lies in its conceivable practical consequences. Another of its central ideas is that inquiry is at root experimental—that when it is successful it produces what James termed *truth* and what Dewey termed *warranted assertibility*.

Dewey insisted that citizenship of any sort demands activities that involve relationships with others, and that citizenship therefore requires that choices be made between what is simply valued and what has proven by experimental means to be valuable. Many of those choices inevitably involve forms of religious faith and practice that have consequences for our fellow human beings.

James and Dewey, in their different ways, recognized that a tendency to religious faith, broadly speaking, is virtually universal. Both opened the door to naturalized forms of religious expression that are comfortable with the advances of the technosciences. Both recognized the important roles of cultural context and temperament in the choice of religious belief and practice. But both sought to find ways that religious faith and practice, like every other area of life, could be informed, intelligent, and melioristic in its practice and outlook. Theirs was a pluralism of a critical variety, a celebration of the many and varied forms of religious expression coupled with a commitment to the type of rigorous inquiry that can provide the basis for choice when a choice must be made.

But what of personal need for supernaturalistic religious faith? As I have indicated, James attempted to solve this issue in terms of what he called *over beliefs* that depend on cultural background and temperament. In his view, we have the right to believe and act upon any hypothesis that is for us live, forced, and momentous. But as a pragmatist James also recognized that it is only by their fruits that religious beliefs can be evaluated.

Dewey's answer to this question took a different turn. He was a philosophical naturalist, and thought that supernaturalism has effects that are often divisive and debilitating. He nevertheless recognized that the effects of supernaturalist beliefs are different for different people in different circumstances. In some circumstances,

supernaturalism can function as an excuse for avoiding intelligent thought and action. In other cases, supernaturalism functions as a means of seeing the world as healthy, whole, and conducive to the values of community. It is only by the fruits of religious belief—examining their place in processes of naturalistic inquiry—that they can be judged.

I hope and expect that teaching about religious experience in our schools, colleges, and universities will become easier as the world's cultures learn more about one another. There are already models in music and food and popular culture for such cross-cultural experiences. It is probable that even many of the world's exclusivist religions will succumb to new opportunities for productive engagement with other religious institutions.[22] As educators, we can play a major role in promoting and accelerating these developments.[23]

In conclusion, let me recur to the three types of students whose needs have helped to structure this presentation. As we all know, teaching about religious experience, like teaching other subjects of importance, is about enlarging our students' options and choices.

To the student of an exclusivist persuasion, a pragmatist pedagogy of religion can open the door to a genuine sense of alternatives in the way of religious belief, and a sense of the effects that advances within the technosciences have had on the objects of religious dogma, especially in terms of the evolution of religious faith, practice, and institutions.

To the student who has been persuaded by relativist claims of deferral and difference, a pragmatist pedagogy of religion can open the door to a genuine sense of the processes by which effective evaluations of competing religious orientations are possible in the light of the ideals, norms, and goals that are emerging as a part of the processes of cultural diversity and globalization.

To the student who believes that religious faith is no longer possible for him or her because affiliation with institutional religion is no longer possible, a pragmatist pedagogy of religion can open the door to an understanding of the potential religious dimensions of all types of experiences, including those that are moral, political, and scientific.

To students of all three types, and to their teachers, I offer the suggestion that the versions of pragmatism advanced by William James and John Dewey offer rich resources for those of us whose task it is to consider "what we can teach when we teach (about) religion."

Notes

1. Herberg, *Protestant–Catholic–Jew*, 258.
2. Casanova, "The Religious Situation," 258.
3. "Event Transcript: Religion Trends in the U. S."
4. "'Nones' on the Rise," *Pew Research Center Religion and Public Life*.
5. Quoted in Feinberg and Layton, "Teaching Bible in Public High Schools," 1282.

6. When pressed by a television journalist in the UK during his bid for the 2016 Republican nomination for President, Governor Walker could not affirm that evolution is a scientific fact.

7. Bellah, "Religious Evolution," 358–74.

8. Miles, *God: A Biography*, 319–27

9. Feinberg and Layton, "Teaching Bible in Public High Schools," 1282.

10. Bernstein, "Religion and Public Life," 189–98.

11. Despite the many images of the Buddha kept by many practitioners of Buddhism, this is not a case of idolatry. As one practitioner put it, "Although it is customary amongst Buddhists to keep Buddha images and to pay their respects to the Buddha, Buddhists are not idol worshipers. Idolatry generally means erecting images of unknown gods and goddesses in various shapes and sizes and to pray directly to these images. The prayers are a request to the gods for guidance and protection. The gods and goddesses are asked to bestow health, wealth, property and to provide for various needs; they are asked to forgive transgressions . . . The 'worshiping' at the Buddha image is quite a different matter. Buddhists revere the image of the Buddha as a gesture to the greatest, wisest, most benevolent, compassionate and holy man who has ever lived in this world. It is a historical fact that this great man actually lived in this world and has done a great service to mankind. The worship of the Buddha really means paying homage, veneration and devotion to Him and what He represents, and not to the stone or metal figure." Dhammananda, "What Buddhists Believe."

12. James, *The Works of William James: The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 556.

13. Ibid., 557.

14. Ibid., 557–58.

15. Ibid., 570.

16. James, *The Works of William James: The Will to Believe*, 270.

17. Dewey, *LW* 9:33.

18. Dewey, *LW* 9:44.

19. Marty, "A Sort of Republican Banquet," 164.

20. Ibid., 158.

21. John Dewey to Charles E. Witzell, 5 June 1943, in *The Correspondence of John Dewey*, vol. 3.

22. The situation appears to be improving, at least in the United States. A Pew Research Center poll on religion in America released on June 23, 2008, indicates that dogmatism is most pronounced among Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses. On a more encouraging note, however, among Protestant Evangelicals, some 57% agreed with the statement, "Many religions can lead to eternal life." Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu groups agreed with that statement by 92%, 56%, 86%, and 89%, respectively. This is a level of religious toleration that is remarkable, given the long history of religious strife. See "Press Conference Transcript."

23. Gladstone, "Schoolgirls are Facing More Threats." Based on United Nations data, an estimated 3,600 attacks against educational institutions, teachers, and students were recorded in 2012 alone. "Attacks against girls accessing education persist and, alarmingly, appear in some countries to be occurring with increased regularity." See "Attacks against Girls' Education on the Increase."

Bibliography

"Attacks against Girls' Education on the Increase." *United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner*. Feb. 9, 2015. http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/Attacksagainstgirlseducationontheincrease.aspx.

Bellah, Robert. "Religious Evolution," *American Sociological Review* 29 (1964): 358–74.

Bernstein, Richard. "Religion and Public Life: Engaged Pluralism." *The Modern Schoolman* 78 (January/March 2001): 189–98.

Casanova, José. "The Religious Situation in the United States 175 Years after Tocqueville." In *Crediting God: Sovereignty & Religion in the Age of Global Capitalism,* edited by Miguel Vatter, 253–84. New York: Fordham University Press, 2011.

Dewey, John. *A Common Faith*. In *The Collected Works of John Dewey, 1882–1953: The Later Works*, edited by Jo Ann Boydston. Vol. 9. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986.

———. *The Correspondence of John Dewey*. Edited by Larry A. Hickman. Vol. 3. Charlotte: Intelex Corporation, 2008.

Dhammananda, K. "What Buddhists Believe." *BuddhaSasana*. http://www.budsas.org/ebud/whatbudbeliev/209.htm.

"Event Transcript: Religion Trends in the U. S." *Pew Research Center Religion and Public Life*. Aug. 19, 2013. http://www.pewforum.org/2013/08/19/event-transcript-religion-trends-in-the-u-s/.

Feinberg, Walter, and Richard Layton. *For the Civic Good: The Liberal Case for Teaching Religion in the Public Schools.* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2014.

———. "Teaching Bible in Public High Schools: Toward a Conception of Educational Legitimacy." *American Educational Research Journal* 50, no. 6 (2013): 1279–1307.

Gladstone, Rick. "Schoolgirls Are Facing More Threats, U.N. Report." *New York Times*, Feb. 10, 2015.

Herberg, Will. *Protestant–Catholic–Jew.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press Books, 1983.

Hildebrand, David, Kimberly Bilica, and John Capps. "Addressing Controversies in Science Education: A Pragmatic Approach to Evolution Education." *Science and Education* 17 (2008): 1033–52.

James, William. *The Works of William James: The Varieties of Religious Experience.* Edited by Frederick Burkhardt. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985.

———. *The Works of William James: The Will to Believe*. Edited by Frederick Burkhardt. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979.

Krikorian, Yervant H. (Ed.). *Naturalism and the Human Spirit.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1944.

Marty, Martin E. "A Sort of Republican Banquet." In *Religion and American Public Life*, edited by Robin W. Lovin, 146–80. New Jersey, Paulist Press, 1986.

Miles, Jack. *God: A Biography*. New York: Knopf, 1995.

"'Nones' on the Rise." *Pew Research Center Religion and Public Life*. Oct. 9, 2012. http://http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/.

"Press Conference Transcript: U.S. Religious Landscape Survey." *Pew Research Center Religion and Public Life*. June 23, 2008. http://www.pewforum.org/2008/06/23/us-religious-landscape-survey-report-ii/.

Larry A. Hickman is Director Emeritus of the Center for Dewey Studies at the Southern Illinois University Carbondale. E-mail: lhickman@siu.edu