"A Civic Religion of the American Way of Life"

18:1 The "new-time religion" in the land had to do with the nation itself. Of course, believers practiced their old-time religions in old and new ways in church and synagogue, at home and work and military camp. But after the Second World War and during the Cold War, the new-time religion of Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and many secularists was in new ways a religion not only of the American Way of Life but of America itself. Although such a religious outlook and practice had a prehistory reaching back for centuries, the emergence itself turned out to be a peculiar mid-century development. In 1955 the Jewish theologian Will Herberg, while busy defining the American world of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, worked his way through a thesaurus of terms to give an appropriate name to what he was finding. His book Protestant-Catholic-Jew included notions of a "common faith," "democracy as religion," "the democratic faith," and "the common religion," among others. Such a faith or religion was inevitable, he thought, and had its creative side. But representing as it did "a radical break with the fundamental presuppositions of both Judaism and Christianity," he thought that to those who professed biblical faith "it must appear as a particularly insidious kind of idolatry." Herberg settled on the term civic faith or a "civic religion of the American Way of Life" to describe this.

18:2 With all others who spelled out this civic faith or this civic reli-

18:3 gion, Herberg found its chief priest in the person of a Cold War era United States chief executive, Dwight D. Eisenhower. Should historians of American religion use presidencies to mark periods of development in the faith of the public? Ordinarily one might answer no. No one speaks of the Harding-Coolidge-Hoover-era civic religion, and few would write of Roosevelt's or Truman's elaboration of civic faith as representing a period of special development. But something new came in 1952, and it is certainly proper to speak of "the Eisenhower era" as a period and its fabrications as an incident in the unfolding of American creeds, liturgies, and practices. This contention may seem strange and hard to sustain, since the muchliked "Ike," the easily victorious general-turned-president for two terms between 1952 and 1960, seemed hardly a charismatic sort, not a likely exemplar of a faith. Reporters liked to collect his bland and meandering sayings—for instance, "Things are more like they are now than they have ever been before."

Herberg was not wasting his time or ruin-
bragging about church religion. In 1954 the president told the Evanston, Illinois, assembly of the World Council of Churches, and thus religious leaders far beyond America, that "contrary to what many people think, the percentage of our population belonging to churches [has] steadily increased. In a hundred years, that percentage has multiplied more than three times." Yet Eisenhower was not needed in the crowded rank of ministers, priests, and rabbis within formal religious institutions and organized religion. His priesthood was part of his role as leader of a "crusade," as he called it, against "godless Communism" abroad and "corruption and materialism" at home. Not since Woodrow Wilson had such language of crusading idealism in the name of faith been heard in the White House. "The things that make us proud to be Americans are of the soul and of the spirit," Eisenhower declared. And being American, for a president who was baptized and who joined a church for the first time after having been elected, meant being a theist. For the American Legion's "Back to God" campaign in 1955 Eisenhower argued that "Recognition of the Supreme Being is the first, the most basic, expression of Americanism. Without God, there could be no American form of government, nor an American way of life."

Should theism be a part of the law of the land? What council could provide the creed or code to spell it out? The final arbiter was the United States Supreme Court, speaking for the judicial branch of government. And define it did. Ironically, it was this Court that for a moment at mid-century had made a theistic reference in the very years when many church members thought it was turning too humanistic. But just as Eisenhower was broadening Woodrow Wilson's notion that America was a "Christian nation" to his own claim that it was a "religious nation," so the Supreme Court was also instinctively widening its claims. In 1931 in *United States v. Macintosh* their predecessors had written for a last time, "We are a Christian people." Now in 1952 a dictum of Justice William O. Douglas, seen as a humanist and secularist by Court critics, was included in a ruling concerning "released-time" religious instruction and public schools, *Zorach v. Clauson:* "We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being."

In many respects, however, that line in *Zorach* was misleading, because the Court itself was moving away from a custodial or priestly role during the Eisenhower years. Thus another 1952 ruling, in *Kedrof v. St. Nicholas Cathedral*, gave supporters of civic religion little to go on. Two factions of the Russian Orthodox church were battling over the use of the Russian Orthodox Cathedral in New York. The patriarch of Moscow and his American followers had a claim on the sanctuary, while another element, split from this jurisdiction after 1917, also wanted a share. There must have been a temptation in the Cold War for the Court to rule against the heritage of the Moscow faction. Yet Justice Stanley Reed argued for the majority that it would violate the separation of church and state for the United States government to interfere with the patriarchate's historic claims, even though there might be some risks along the way of the infiltration of "atheistic or subversive influences." And Justice Frankfurter reinforced this notion of risk: "Under our Constitution it is not open to the governments of this Union to reinforce the loyalty of their citizens by deciding who is the true exponent of their religion."

Another instance that would have given the Court an occasion to decide on democratic dogma affecting religion was *Burstyn v. Wilson*. This dealt with a case involving a film by Roberto Rossellini. In it, an Italian girl, impregnated by a stranger, confuses him with Joseph and herself with the Virgin Mary. The New York Board of Regents in 1950 found an exhibitor of the film guilty of sacrilege. When the New York appellate courts agreed, the Supreme Court took up the case. Justices Tom Clark and Felix Frankfurter agonized their way around the concept of sacrilege. Then they decided, in Frankfurter's words, that what might be considered sacrilege could not be the business of a society that separated church and state: "Conduct and beliefs dear to one may seem the rankest 'sacrilege' to another." Clark showed that the Court was recognizing the ever-growing pluralism in American life: "It is not the business of government in our nation to suppress real or imagined attacks upon a particular religious doctrine, whether they appear in publications, speeches, or motion pictures." Orthodoxy could not be coerced. The Court unanimously declared that censorship of the sort involved in the case of *Burstyn v. Wilson* was unconstitutional.

Dissents by Justices Hugo Black and Robert H. Jackson revealed uneasiness with what Douglas had said in *Zorach v. Clauson*. Yes, Black agreed, Americans in 1789 and 1952 alike were "a religious people." But the First Amendment was designed to prevent the government from involving itself with religion and thus jeopardizing both the equality and the freedom all citizens now enjoyed. "The choice of all" to worship, they said, "has been as
free as the choice of those who answered the call to worship moved only by the music of the old Sunday morning church bells." The spiritual mind has been free. But "the First Amendment has lost much if the religious follower and the atheist are no longer to be judicially regarded as entitled to equal justice under law." Jackson's dissent was less romantic, more militant. A religious person himself, who sent his children to privately supported church schools, he was angered at the implication that to challenge the Court on this subject was an "antireligious, atheistic, or agnostic" act. "My evangelistic brethren confuse an objection to compulsion with an objection to religion." So Jackson was worried: "The day that this country ceases to be free for irreligion it will cease to be free for religion-except for the sect that can win political power." Religion had to belong to the voluntary realm, encouraged by rhetoric or example. This in his own way Eisenhower was prepared to supply.

What other agency than the White House or the Supreme Court could have set forth that creed; what company of theologians might have codified that dogma? The Congress was the best-poised candidate to act in that way, but the First Amendment of the United States Constitution certainly gave Congress no license to do so. To be sure, there had been sporadic attempts from time to time, naturally revived in the Eisenhower era, to amend the Constitution to correct what some thought had been an oversight in the vision of the nation's founders. Vermont senator Ralph Flanders tried to give Christian specificity to the civic faith by a constitutional amendment that would recognize the authority and law of Jesus Christ. For a time during the Cold War government postal cancellation stamps asked citizens to "Pray for Peace," without directing to whom to pray. But in the years when not Christianity but interfaith, specifically tri-faith religion was coming to the center, the proposal of New Jersey congressman Peter Rodino seemed to make more sense. He wanted citizens to "join together, Protestant, Jew, and Catholic," in his case to support a theistic addition to the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. And Michigan congressman Louis C. Rabaut was appropriately vague when he argued that it was good to show "our dependence upon God" and "our faith in His support," a demonstration motivated by "the ever increasing attacks upon us by forces of godlessness and atheism."

Though the Christian Amendment got little backing in the Senate, one legislative affirmation of theism moved faith from the persuasive to the coercive zones of life. On the thousands of pages of the Congressional Record, one could find frequent courtesy inclusions of religious material; many references to God cropped up in the speeches and writings of lawmakers. But only an event in 1954 made God a part of the law of the land. A nation which had stressed to itself and others during the war and the Cold War that it was One Nation, Indivisible, had coerced the saluting of the flag along with a pledge of allegiance to it. Jehovah's Witnesses early in the war years had had a hard time avoiding that salute and pledge. Still, something seemed to be missing: God. The original pledge had appeared on September 8, 1892, in the Youth's Companion: "I pledge allegiance to my flag and to the Republic for which it stands; one nation indivisible with liberty and justice for all." A former Baptist minister, Francis Bellamy, had drafted it to promote the four-hundredth anniversary observance of Columbus' discovery of America. In 1945, during World War II, Congress saw fit to recognize a then slightly revised version. During debate over Jehovah's Witnesses dissent, in West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette, Justice Frankfurter resorted to casuistry when he argued that the flag salute was not akin to oath tests in government, which would have been simply unconstitutional. I differed, he said, because saluting the flag did not suppress belief or curb it. In Barrette, students were exempt from saying those words. But later rulings argued that teachers were not exempt from leading the pledge. That would not have been much of a problem to any teacher outside groups like Jehovah's Witnesses, the pledge was in no formal sense religious. Until 1954. It may seem strange to find a secular Congress supplementing the pledge invented decades before by a religious person in a religious magazine, but few things done by the 83rd Congress were more popular than changing the Pledge. On February 7, 1954, the Reverend George M. Docherty, pastor to many in Washington, on the topic of the pledge. His tones reflected the He conjured images of "little Muscovites" who could "repeat similar pledge to their hammer-and-sickle flag," since they also claimed to support liberty and justice in their republic. Insert the words "under God" into the sacrosanct American pledge, he argued, and you would have a distinctive one, not utterable by those Muscovites. Living "under God" was a "definitive factor in the American way of life." The preacher surmised that some "honest atheists" in the United States might have some trouble with this but then he gave his own peculiar reading of the First Amendment:
"It is not, and never was meant to be, a separation of religion and life." He went on to rule out atheists from first-class citizenship: "An atheist American is a contradiction in terms." It is important to note that Docherty was no extremist; he spoke from the center of the core of the mainstream establishment. In fact, Mr. and Mrs. Eisenhower were in the congregation, and that evening the president joined some Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish clerics on the radio to say, "Whatever our individual church, whatever our personal creed, in our fundamental faith we are all one. Together we thank the Power that has made and preserved us a nation." Churches climbed aboard a cause that brought some people in Congress more mail than they had had for any other legislation. The Unitarian Ministers' Association of Boston was almost alone in sending resolutions opposing the change, but few listened to them at a time when veterans' organizations, newspaper chains, fraternal organizations, and labor unions were "getting religion" and joining the cause. The Unitarians said the change was "an invasion of religious liberty," but this was not the kind of case most other religious groups wanted to challenge.

Motion toward law had begun, and Representative Rabaut, eager to be on the popular side, seconded the motion. "You may argue from dawn to dusk about differing political, economic, and social systems," he said, "but the fundamental issue which is the unbridgeable gap between America and Communist Russia is a belief in Almighty God." Rabaut had introduced a bill to insert those words a year earlier, in April 1953, but no one noticed until the Presbyterian pulpiteer took up the issue. Similarly ignored had been sixteen other like resolutions in the House. Now Michigan senator Homer Ferguson picked up the cause and sent a resolution to the Senate on May 11, 1954. Rabaut resented the Senate's aim to get credit for godliness and presented his own bill. The House was so eager to claim credit that it broke protocol and passed Rabaut's proposal, which differed from Ferguson's version by only a comma. Flag Day, June 14, was near at hand, so Ferguson asked his colleagues to overlook the House's bad manners this one time. Thereupon the Senate passed the House resolution unanimously on June 8, and the bill went to the Eisenhower White House for ready signature. The president saw here a charter for daily proclamation by schoolchildren of the "dedication of our Nation and our people to the Almighty." Here was a sign of "our country's true meaning," an affirmation of "the transcendence of religious faith in America's heritage and future." As always, those "little Musco-
Eisenhower's baptizer, who said of the president, "It may not be too much to say that through his personal conduct and expression he has become, in a very real sense, the focal point of a moral resurgence and spiritual awakening of national proportions."

Fortunately for the nation, thought Miller, Eisenhower had the kind of personality and mien that made it possible for him to announce a crusade without becoming a crusader, a zealot. "What was the cause? Who was the infidel, where the Holy City?" Ike, to be sure, had first pronounced Washington corrupt, but that was not a new theme. Such was an American tradition, and the Eisenhower associates themselves were soon contributing to the life of that tradition. Was public adulation an escape from politics? During the Eisenhower period came the Hungarian Revolution and the Suez Crisis in 1956; the Russians' lead in the space race after Sputnik in 1957; the racial crisis at Little Rock, Arkansas; and a cooling economy in 1958 while the Berlin crisis shocked America; a U-2 spy embarrassment came in 1959, the same year a summit went bad and the Japanese rioted against American ties. And here was a president remaining popular while uttering mere and simple pieties.

Miller monitored Eisenhower early and for a long time. On July 7, 1953, he was already deciding that the president was sincere but inauthentic. "Although he won votes with it, Mr. Eisenhower plainly did not employ the 'God stuff,' as Franklin Roosevelt is reported to have called it, simply as a political device." Sincerely, Eisenhower grounded his program in a "deeply felt religious faith." Miller caught attention with an apt phrase: "President Eisenhower, like many Americans, is a very fervent believer in a very vague religion." And, fortunately for the interest in Miller's book, it also caught the other side of pious Washington. Miller knew an irreverent story that ended, "Dammit, we forgot the opening prayer." Also irreverent was commentator Elmer Davis, who wrote that the president on one Independence Day had called the public to a day of penance and prayer and then "himself caught four fish in the morning, played eighteen holes of golf in the afternoon and spent the evening at the bridge table."

The laughs were there, and easily gotten, but Miller cried, or cried out, as well. "The faith is not in God but in faith; we worship our own worshiping." The critic did not know whether to call all this "the semi-secular religion or the semi-religious secularism" that marked the nation, but he did see in all of it a utilitarian view of religion. "Officialdom prefers religion which is useful for national purposes, but undemanding and uncomplicated in itself. It
President Dwight D. Eisenhower exemplified and embodied many dimensions of "the religious revival" in the generation after World War II. On October 12, 1958, he took part in the cornerstone laying at the Interchurch Center in New York, an event attended by ecclesiastical dignitaries and a congregation of 30,000 people. (Photo: National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA.)

also wants religion which is negotiable to the widest possible public. Miller moved on to score the public. In 1954 he wrote that "the press says that the United States is having a religious revival now, but one wonders whether those are quite the words to describe what is going on." He was convinced that "there is an increase in religious behavior, but it is not clear that this quantitative increase represents any qualitative change in the nation's religious life." Of course, intellectuals were reading Kafka and Kierkegaard, Berdyaev and Maritain, but the theological renewal born of all this appeared "to bear little relation to the revival of religious interest in the broad mass of the people." Where now were the profound revivalists like Jonathan Edwards and Walter Rauschenbusch of the American past, who had fused piety and public prophecy? The combinations now of "religion and Americanism, God and coun-

try, Cross and flag" left America in a tradition "geared to arouse enthusiasm and passion, not to produce wisdom and patience"; that tradition was "more at home with single, simple, moral choices, than with complex, continuing political problems."

Billy Graham, the evangelist who in Miller's view should have worn but did not wear the mantle of people like Edwards and Rauschenbusch, vaulted to Eisenhower's defense. He said he had met the general in 1952 when Ike was still commanding forces near Paris. Hard-drinking, poker-playing Texan Sid Richardson urged Graham to promote Eisenhower, so Graham, while claiming to be above politics, wrote the future president an encouraging letter. Eisenhower later asked Richardson: "Who was that young preacher you had write me? It was the damndest letter I ever got." Richardson responded: "I want to send this young fellow over [to talk to you] who's stirring up the country so..." The two talked; in fact, at one time during the campaign Eisenhower whispered to Graham, "I don't believe the American people are going to follow anybody who's not a member of a church." When Graham learned that Eisenhower was of River Brethren lineage, the evangelist showed more savvy about denominational prestige than comparative dogma when he recommended Presbyterianism to Eisenhower because it was "fairly close" to River Brethren.

The record of the 1952 campaign found Graham saying in the spring, "the people are hungry for a moral crusade, and they need a Moses or a Daniel to lead them in this hour." Eisenhower might take on the aspect of such a biblical figure. Graham talked twice with Eisenhower and reassured others that he sensed "a dependence upon God." The candidate told the evangelist "on both occasions that the hope of building a better America lay in a spiritual revival." If all that was not sufficiently explicit for Graham's constituency there was more: "Another thing that encourages me about Mr. Eisenhower is that he is taking advice from some genuine, born-again Christians." After election the new president summoned Graham to a New York hotel to ask advice about "bringing something spiritual, some spiritual note and tone into the inauguration ceremony." Graham answered, "General, you can do more to inspire the American people to a more spiritual way of life than any other man alive!" After the ceremonies Graham said he was sure that "the overwhelming majority of the American people felt a little more secure realizing that we have a man who believes in prayer at the helm of our government at this crucial hour." And Eisenhower told Graham, according to the evangelist, "Billy, I be-
lieve one reason I was elected President was to lead America in a religious revival." He did.

For the record, Eisenhower's opponent in both elections, Adlai Stevenson, was a Unitarian, a liberal, a divorced man, and thus in that climate (for these reasons and others) unelectable. But he presented a cautious and more liberal version of the civic faith himself. More eloquently than Eisenhower, he preached to the nation: "Your salvation is in your own hands; in the stubbornness of your minds, the tenacity of your hearts and such blessings as God, sorely tried by His children, shall give us." In the crisis times, redeemed America "cannot lose, and will pass from darkness to the dawn of a brighter day than even this thrice-blessed land of ours has ever known." Like Eisenhower, Stevenson the intellectual could draw on the two primal nostalgic images of the day: "People are smarter than some may think-'There's still a God's plenty left in people of the little red schoolhouse and the little white steeple.'" Stevenson when pressed by Senator Joseph McCarthy for being "soft on Communism" could quote Catholic bishops against "dishonesty, slander, detraction and defamation of character" as "truly transgressions of God's Commandments" in political life. He could connect Mormonism in a Salt Lake City speech with the American Way of Life: "Let us recall that our basic faith in liberty of conscience has an ancient ancestry. We can trace it back through Christian Europe, and through pagan Rome, back to the Old Testament prophets." But he was against exclusivism: this faith "is by no means exclusive with us. It is in fact our bond of unity with all free men. But we are its ordained guardians today."

Liberals as well as conservatives, Democrats as well as Republicans, knew the need to address the Cold War spiritual contrast. At Alamo Plaza in San Antonio in October as the campaign of 1952 was ending, Stevenson paid attention to Texans, with "many men of Spanish blood" among them, and reminded them of the foe they had faced long ago at the Alamo, "an enemy who offers no quarter." But the new enemy is more threatening, "for his aim is total conquest-not merely of the earth, but of the human mind. He seeks to destroy the very idea of freedom, the concept of God Himself." And he could speak of divine election, a call, a covenant: "God has set for us an awesome mission: nothing less than the leadership of the free world." God gave power and opportunity and expected the nation to be good stewards. Stevenson was aware of the vivid pluralism of the nation. To campaign volunteers in Boston that month he said on a Sunday, "Some of us worship in churches, some in synagogues, some on golf courses," and added, "I don't know whether there are any Mohammedan Volunteers who worship in mosques." For now, "we are all children of the same Judaic-Christian civilization, with very much the same religious background basically." He did not want citizens to "forget about the religious sources of democracy." In the Cold War "our people will triumph, because of the fact that they express eternal truths and because of the fact that the communists embrace eternal wrongs in their meanings." Generous social programs would be the best way of waging the Cold War: "The first answer to communism is not a lesser, but a fuller application of Judaic-Christian ethics to the neighborhood of nations around us." Stevenson lost the election, but he promoted the common faith "under God" with as much passion and more theological precision than Eisenhower: "We vote as many, but we pray as one," said Stevenson. Giving such attention to a losing presidential candidate could be out of place, except that it helps amplify the picture of a religious revival including bipartisan civic faith.

Stevenson's fellow Illinoisan, University of Chicago historian Daniel Boorstin-typed as a "consensus historian" in the time when the One Nation formula was so important-listened in on Stevenson and found him religious but indifferent about denominations. Boorstin quoted the candidate of 1952: "If it's true that politics is the art of compromise, I've had a good start; my mother was a Republican and a Unitarian, my father was a Democrat and a Presbyterian. I ended up in his party and her church." Boorstin, more conservative than William Lee Miller, observed some of the same theological trends in the candidates and the country. America was a two-party political system reinforced by "nondenominationalism" in religion. Religions had to be instrumental for governmental purposes. That is, "they commend themselves to us for the services they perform more than for the truths which they affirm." Religion in such a context had to be personal; it should not intrude on public affairs but must perform services "subordinated to the need of the individual personality." And it must be nondenominational. On this third rubric he cited Eisenhower. Boorstin saw all sides promoting "interfaith" activities to demonstrate the "vitality of religion in general."

Not since the days when Roman emperors were worshiped, Boorstin thought, had there likely "been a comparable submersion of separate religious beliefs in a common generalized religion." Yes, it was true, there were denominations, hate move-
ments, Know-Nothings, the Ku Klux Klan, and the anti-Catholic proclamations of Paul Blanshard as counterevidence. But America was being kept from the worst religious strife because of its "ability to produce a kind of elixir, sometimes vapid and always unpuptent, a blended distillate of all our different religions," a religion without dogmas. It was neither pantheism nor humanism but the "lowest common denominator of all presently accepted and respectable institutional religions found within the borders of our country." All this made it difficult for Americans to communicate with cultures that did not mix religion and politics in this way.

Boorstin pointed all this out in The Genius of American Politics, published in 1953. At its heart was a chapter titled "The Mingling of Political and Religious Thought." The Chicago professor compared the instrumental religion of America to that which the great historian Edward Gibbon had seen in the age of the Antonines in Rome. Gibbon wrote: "The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosopher as equally false; and by the magistrate as equally useful. And thus toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord." In that climate, Boorstin noted, "religion is of enormous importance," while "theology and religious studies languish." The boom in these latter lines was just beginning and could still be almost overlooked in 1952 when Boorstin was writing. But the historian also noticed a trend among some in his time to make "the un-American demand for a philosophy of democracy" to use "as a weapon against Russia and a prop for our own institutions." Citizens wanted something salable that could compete with Russia's approach in the world market. The threat to this development came not from the religious right but from the left, where people were puzzled that America had not yet come up with a philosophy. "They are," Boorstin said, "even frightened at what they might find-or fail to find-when they open the sanctum sanctorum of national belief." These credalists of democracy on the left were dangerous friends who, finding the national Holy of Holies empty, would refuse to admit this and would develop an idolatry, making "their own graven image." Boorstin cautioned both camps against this: "We must refuse to become crusaders for liberalism, in order to remain liberals," and "we must refuse to become crusaders for conservatism, in order to conserve the institutions and the genius which have made America great."

Instinctively one turns to the right to look for the other kind of people who made Boorstin nervous, conservatives this side of Senator Joseph McCarthy who wanted to invent ideology for Cold War. But it was voices on the liberal left, though less frequently heard and less noisy, who would make much of Eisenhower's simply stated faith, "I believe in democracy." At mid-century these voices drew on the influence of philosopher John Dewey, who in 1934 had published A Common Faith; the book's substance matched Eisenhower's but differed in its dismissiveness of church religion. One of the most articulate of the Deweyites was Mount Holyoke College chaplain and professor J. Paul Williams, a Methodist-reared Congregational cleric who was also a member of a Friends Meeting. In 1952 he wrote What Americans Believe and How They Worship, a work whose last chapter outlined a religion of democracy on Deweyan lines.

How did Williams come to talk about the common faith in a book whose main subject was the many faiths? He catalogued and discussed "an astonishing number of religious sects" that flourished in the United States. But the encyclopedic treatment of their peculiarities served to show-as Boorstin had shown, though against "certain sections of the American intelligentsia" - the presence and utility of religion. "A man's religion is whatever he does to relate himself to what he believes is the supreme reality in the universe. Religion in this sense is basic to all high living." And "religion is essential also to the welfare of societies. Every society is at bottom a spiritual entity. Every society is founded on some kind of religion." For that reason, "the thing most worth knowing about any people is the actual status of their religious thinking." Even though "more than one-third of the American people are members of no church or synagogue," they too were religious as Williams had defined religion.

For four hundred pages Williams tried to give fair-minded treatment to denominations that turned out to be for him irrelevant. To him a form of nationalism was what mattered. "Probably no man can be a successful politician in America today unless he does obeisance to nationalistic gods, certainly not if he attacks them." The college chaplain quoted the favored liberal columnist Walter Lippmann from World War II days: "we must consider first and last the American national interest." Over against church religion, "we shall succeed in so far as we can become fully enlightened American nationalists." In a chapter appended to the 1962 edition, "The Role of Religion in Shaping American Destiny," Williams revealed what the whole book had led up to. The 1962 edition-in
perfect elaboration of the logic of the 1952 volume, but written at a time when he thought the religious revival was "about over" -
gave him a chance to cite statistics of denominations, but he found
denominational religion less important than either private religion
or societal religion. Societal religion was the most important:
now, it "would be shared with the members of a whole society." He quoted J. Robin Williams, a sociologist of religion who argued, following Emile Durkheim, that "every functioning society has to an important degree a common religion." Thus "a society's common-value system-its 'moral solidarity'-is always correlated with and to a degree dependent upon a shared religious
orientation." Eisenhower and Stevenson found this in Judaic-
Christian roots. Williams had to go further.
Williams in 1962 cited essays that historian Sidney E. Mead had published at the height of the Eisenhower-era revival. Mead wrote of a late-nineteenth-century emergence, a religion of "the American way of life." Now there were two religions, one of the
denominations and the other "the religion of the democratic society
and nation." Other worthies were also writing in support of republican religion and democratic faith. Williams saw that such faith could oppose the quasi-religion of communism. "The peril of our position is increased by the fact that the devotees of Communism evidence all the earmarks, not merely of religious dedication, but of religious fanaticism." He was dangerously critical of the
churches. "Like most institutions churches strive to expand the
area of their control. Thus they seek dominion over the whole of
religion. They tend to religious imperialism" and thus violate society's "common religion." Where could one locate the generating
center of such a nonimperial faith? For Williams and his kind, the answer was in the government. But even Walter Lippmann's recent work, The Public Philosophy, Williams thought, did not go far enough; because Lippmann spoke of values as being ultimate, Williams thought he himself ought to be blunt and call for
religion. 18:31 The Mount Holyoke chaplain was only more blunt and clear than others about this common faith not based in churches or in the Judaic-Christian lineage. His societal religion,
his common faith, in an America that was spiritual to the core, urged that "democracy must become an object of religious dedication. Americans must come to look on the democratic ideal
(not necessarily American practice of it) as the Will of God or, if they prefer, the Law of Nature." The articulators of this religion of democracy had to be

systematic about spiritual integration, or they would be as haphazard as the churches. Of course, once they were in command, they should mobilize churches and synagogues. Their leaders had experience, skill, personal integrity, and the loyalty of multitudes. "Many church and synagogue leaders already make the teaching of democracy a major objective."

Was not such a humanistic religion a sect of its own? Was it not too narrow, as its critics claimed, while they were ecumenical? No, argued Williams, democracy was "a way of life for all men." Would not teaching democracy as religious dogma, as "the Will of God," pull religion down to "mere ethics?" No, such an accusation made too much of eternal salvation, mystical experience, and the like. Churches and synagogues when they counterattacked his kind were exclusivist and imperialist. Williams collected names used by the exclusivists in order to stigmatize his position: "a fourth faith, 'a form of nationalism,' a 'conspiracy' against Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism, 'a vague and somewhat sentimental religious syncretism,' a 'superreligion,' a particularly insidious kind of idolatry." No: it was simply a religion of democracy.

How could this civic religion be institutionalized? "The State
must be brought into the picture," Williams said. "Governmental agencies must teach the democratic ideal as religion." In fact, "systematic and universal indoctrination" in the values on which a society is based was essential "if that society is to have any permanence or stability." Now he sounded protective: "the only way we can preserve our liberties in private and denominational religion is to forgo some liberties in societal religion." And he was programmatic: use the public schools as if they were established churches. They should promote the religion of democracy with "metaphysical sanctions" and "ceremonial reinforcement." They must be dogmatic, indoctrinating the young with the notion that "the democratic ideal accords with ultimate reality," whether that reality is seen in naturalistic or supernaturalistic terms. The ceremonies should glorify the values, calling for self-appraisal and rededication. Nazis and Japanese knew how to do all this for evil ends; why not have American societal religion do it for humane purposes?

Williams, of course, had no following like that of President Eisenhower and Governor Stevenson in the center, or figures on the right as mild as Will Herberg and as mean as Joseph R. McCarthy. But his appearance here shows that civic religion had
advocates who could articulate from the liberal left an anticom- 
munist prodemocratic vision to support a version of the American 
Way of Life in Cold War times. Across the spectrum, then, the 
religious revival quickened civic faith and public religion on un-
precedented scales.

According to all evidence, the Americans who welcomed 
the religious revival for the encouragement it gave to civic faith and 
public religion continued to devote most of their spiritual energies 
to personal faith and private religion. Of course, the two larger 
spheres of expression intersect, overlap, and transform each other. 
The revival of interest in civic religion, nurtured under the pulpit of 
a Dwight Eisenhower in the White House, colored the elaborations 
of faith within little white churches, most of them featuring a 
United States flag in the chancel, just as it colored the character of 
new suburban synagogues and inner-city congregations. And the 
readiness of citizens to respond to symbols on any level made it 
easier for civil leaders to make appeals to religion. A national re-
vival of interest in religion has to be by definition popular. There 
can be a recovery of formal theology in the seminaries, and there 
was around mid-century. There can be ecumenical committees and 
movements for social action on the part of elites. But unless mil-
ions are swept up or at least lured by a cause, it is not likely to be 
called a revival or experienced as one. Once upon a time revivals 
were measured by the size of the camp meetings and tent-service 
crowds or by the numbers of souls gathered at the river for baptism. 
At mid-century, for the new-time religion, the measurers used 
opinion polls, lists of best-selling religious books, and assessments 
of the size of audiences for biblical films or radio and television