

A dangerous idea: why private religion is bad news for the good news

Stephen Pickard

Dangerous ideas: a threat to praise of God?

Psychologists identify dangerous ideas as those ideas that propel people and groups into great conflict.¹ Roy and Judy Eidelson observe that:

The toll in death, suffering, and displacement caused by conflicts engaging groups defined by ethnicity, nationality, religion, or other social identities has reached staggering proportions over the past decade. With expertise in research and intervention, psychologists have critical contributions to make to more fully understanding and more effectively confronting this distressing global phenomenon.²

And what is the force behind this reality? Two other psychologists have argued that:

[t]here is perhaps no more dangerous force in social relations than the human mind. People's capacities to categorize, interpret, and go 'beyond the information given' readily lead to the stereotyping and dehumanization that escalate and entrench group conflict.³

The Rt Revd Professor Stephen Pickard is Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Charles Sturt University, Canberra. This article has been peer reviewed.

The Eidelsons identify five belief domains—superiority, injustice, vulnerability, distrust, and helplessness—as particularly important areas conducive to dangerous ideas. For example, the idea of superiority of certain ethnic, cultural or religious groups could be an example of a dangerous idea that generates significant conflict today.

Ideas that generate, and are appealed to in order to justify, violent conflict are dangerous. What we observe today in our world is that the spirit of praise is constantly subverted by the spirit of war and hate. Might there not be some ideas that are dangerous because they undermine or destroy the possibility of genuine praise of God? Human beings are made for praise; it appears to be part of our DNA. St Augustine captures the matter so well in his opening statement in the *Confessions*: ‘Can any praise be worthy of the Lord’s majesty? How magnificent is his strength! How inscrutable his wisdom! We are one of your creatures, Lord, and our instinct is to praise you.’⁴ The poet Rainer Rilke sums it up: ‘To praise is the whole thing.’⁵ Whatever threatens true praise of God diminishes and threatens the human response to God’s gift of abundant life. The background to this is a haunting comment from the Jewish writer Abraham Heschel. Our culture, he writes,

finds it easy to convey resentments ... but hard to communicate praise ... we have nearly lost the art of conveying to our children our power to praise, our ability to cherish the things that cannot be quantified.⁶

Heschel’s words resonate in our contemporary world. Does religion offer a genuine counter to Heschel’s comment? Can it redress the balance or is it part of the problem? Or is religion an inherently dangerous idea? Or perhaps there is a particular form of religion that is especially dangerous? This article probes such questions.

Is religion a dangerous idea?

There is no shortage of contemporary atheists who argue that religion *per se* is a dangerous idea. Why? Various reasons are offered. Religion, following Marx, is an opiate of the people that generates a false consciousness and undermines the empowerment of oppressed people. Or perhaps we take Feuerbach’s approach whereby religion refers to a divine being (or beings) that is a consequence of human projection. This anthropological reduction of religion is perhaps the most powerful force affecting attitudes in the last

two centuries and underlies the contemporary atheist position. Perhaps most significant in our present context is the view that religion is dangerous because it is the cause of violence. I want briefly to consider this proposal because it is such a popular idea promoted in the public space today and it seems to cast an aura of suspicion over any authentic voice of praise.

Religion is dangerous because it causes violence?

This is a popular point of view and one that is stubbornly resistant to change and extremely dangerous. In her book, *Fields of Blood*,⁷ the well-known author Karen Armstrong (one of the foremost scholars and popular writers on world religion and a former Catholic nun) states: 'In the West the idea that religion is inherently violent is now taken for granted and seems self evident.'⁸ She continues: 'As one who speaks on religion, I constantly hear how cruel and aggressive it [religion] has been, a view that, eerily, is expressed in the same way almost every time: "Religion has been the cause of all the major wars in history."' Armstrong notes that it is an odd remark. 'Obviously the two world wars were not fought on account of religion.' She goes on to state, 'Yet so indelible is the aggressive image of religious faith in our secular consciousness that we routinely load the violent sins of the twentieth century on to the back of "religion" and drive it out into the political wilderness.'⁹ Armstrong argues that modern society has made a scapegoat of faith.

Armstrong observes that even those who admit that religion has not been responsible for all the violence and warfare of the human race 'still take its essential belligerence for granted.' The claim is usually related to monotheistic religions because 'once people believe that "God" is on their side, compromise becomes impossible.'¹⁰ And of course it is easy to recite a long list of events that seem to support this: the Crusades, the Wars of Religion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or more recent terrorism committed in the name of religion that supports the view that Islam is particularly aggressive. Armstrong argues that religion is neither inherently violent nor the cause of violence. On the other hand she does not shirk away from showing how the actual history of religion has at times been complicit in, and in some cases a driver for, violence. And of course since the Australian Royal Commission into the sexual abuse of children in our public institutions (including the church) the link between religion and violence has good empirical evidence and significant recognition in the wider community.

Armstrong states at the end of her book: ‘We have seen that, like the weather, religion “does lots of different things”. To claim that it has a single, unchanging and inherently violent essence is not accurate. Identical religious beliefs and practices have inspired diametrically opposed courses of action.’¹¹ For example, in the Hebrew Bible the Deuteronomists were virulently against foreign peoples, while the priestly authors sought reconciliation.

Armstrong’s tour de force on the subject is worth the read. So is another recent book by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, the highly respected philosopher, author and social commentator who has been described as ‘Britain’s most authentically prophetic voice’. The title of his book is disarming, *Not in God’s Name: Confronting Religious Violence*.¹² Like Armstrong, Sacks argues that religion is not the cause of violence and he does not shy away from some of the brute realities of life that impact all people, whether religious or non-religious.

Sacks zeroes in on those acts of violence that claim God’s stamp of approval. Hence the title, *Not in God’s Name*. Sacks takes his cue from the statement by Blaise Pascal, ‘Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.’¹³ And Sacks responds with the observation that ‘[w]hen religion turns men into murderers, God weeps’. Sacks reminds us of ‘one of the most searing sentences in religious literature from Genesis. When ‘God saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth ... God regretted that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain’ (Gen. 6:6).¹⁴ Sacks puts it bluntly:

Too often in the history of religion, people have killed in the name of the God of life, waged war in the name of the God of peace, hated in the name of the God of love and practiced cruelty in the name of the God of compassion. When this happens, God speaks, sometimes in a still, small voice almost inaudible beneath the clamour of those claiming to speak on his behalf. What God says at such times is: *Not in My Name*.¹⁵

Sacks recounts a long list of current brutalities and violence committed in the name of God. He notes that a century ago Christians made up twenty per cent of the population of the Middle East; today they make up four per cent. He also notes that the majority of victims of Islamist violence are Muslims. He argues that we need a name to describe ‘this deadly phenomenon that

can turn ordinary non-psychopathic people into cold-blooded murderers of schoolchildren, aid workers, journalists and people at prayer.¹⁶ He calls it 'altruistic evil': evil committed in a sacred cause, in the name of high ideals'. And he makes the point that there is nothing particularly religious about altruistic evil, citing Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, Mao Zedong's China and Pol Pot's Cambodia as 'avowedly secular'.¹⁷

Sacks states, 'None of the great religions can say, with unflinching self-knowledge, "Our hands never shed innocent blood"'.¹⁸ In Sacks' view Jews, Christians and Muslims have to be prepared to ask 'the most uncomfortable questions':

Does the God of Abraham want his disciples to kill for his sake? Does he demand human sacrifice? Does he rejoice in holy war? Does he want us to hate our enemies and terrorise unbelievers? Have we read our sacred texts correctly? What is God saying to us, here, now? We are not prophets but we are heirs and we are not bereft of guidance on these fateful issues.¹⁹

Sacks poses hard questions. His own view is nuanced: '[T]here is a connection between religion and violence, but it is oblique, not direct'.²⁰ In this respect he notes that 'religious people in the grip of strong emotions—fear, pain, anxiety, confusion, a sense of loss and humiliation—often dehumanise their opponents with devastating results'.²¹

What is Sack's response to this state of affairs? He makes a fundamental distinction between the covenant of Noah and the covenant of Abraham. The covenant of Noah is the covenant of our common humanity. The early stories of Genesis—Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, the Flood, Noah covenant, Babel—are stories of our common humanity. We are all in the same boat, as it were. These stories bind us together so that we are called to recognise the face of God in each other before any distinctions. It is only after the covenant of Noah that our founding narratives turn to the particularity of the Abrahamic covenant—to the promise to Abraham to be the father of a future nation. This is the covenant of faith. Sacks argues, and has for some years, 'that *our common humanity precedes our religious differences*'.²² This axiom is critical for it leads to the basic proposal that 'any religion that dehumanises others merely because their faith is different has misunderstood the God of Abraham'.²³

In other words there is no justification for religious violence when the founding sacred texts of Jews, Christians and Muslims are subjected to a careful theological interpretation. This accords with Sacks' view that 'weapons win wars but it takes ideas to win the peace.'²⁴ Thus while religion might not directly cause violence, it is from time to time implicated and complicit, and the antidote is better theology. Proper interpretation of sacred texts reveals the solution to the problem of violence in religion. This seems both reasonable and wise, but is his proposal sufficient?

There is an alternative view that argues that religion, rather than being the cause of violence, in fact functions to manage violence. On this account the religious impulse referred to by St Augustine—'The thought of you stirs us so deeply that we cannot be content unless we praise you'—is a false or misplaced impulse. This alternative view suggests that the deeper impulse of human life has its energy in violence rather than praise. The consequence of this view is that religion is not the cause of violence, but violence is the cause of religion and that as a result religion is the solution to violence. On this account violence has nothing to do with religion as such. It has to do with identity and life in groups. And precisely here we have a problem. How can we live together without resorting to violence? Or rather, how can we manage our predispositions to violence? If we can't find a way to manage violence, human community and culture will not be a viable project. Enter religion—the solution to the problem of violence among and between human beings.

The person who has reflected on this perhaps more than anyone else in the modern period is the French anthropologist and philosopher René Girard. Girard's theory of the scapegoating mechanism has exercised significant influence in modern discussions of religion and violence.²⁵ Clearly the relationship between religion and violence is more complex than it might first appear. Is it the case that religion causes violence? Or does violence create the conditions for religion to arise as a tool for social management? Even putting the issues in this way is dangerous for a very good reason. Preoccupation with the relationship between religion and violence can become a major distraction from the genuinely dangerous idea embedded in cultural and political views about religion and violence.

Not religion but its privatisation is THE dangerous idea

The discussion so far has traded on the fact that we all assume we know what religion is. In the West ‘we see “religion” as a coherent system of obligatory beliefs, institutions and rituals, centring on a supernatural God, whose practice is essentially private and hermetically sealed off from all “secular” activities.’²⁶ In other cultures and through the ages the idea of religion has never been reduced to beliefs and practices separated off from the rest of life. But that notion of religion is an invention of the West.

The Latin word *religio* concerns obligations. To say that something was *religio* meant it was incumbent on you to do it, whether it was a cultic observance or keeping an oath. *Religio* was that which was binding. St Augustine gave this a slightly new twist by relating *religio* to the binding that occurred between God and people and with each other. And in medieval Europe *religio* came to mean the monastic life with its quite particular obligations for the monk compared to the ‘secular’ priest who worked in the world (*saeculum*). In the pre-modern period religion permeated all aspects of life. It could not be cordoned off in some private sphere. Ancient people ‘would have found it impossible to see where “religion” ended and “politics” began’ because, as Armstrong notes, ‘[t]hey wanted to invest everything they did with ultimate value.’²⁷ Why? Because we are meaning-seeking creatures.

The notion of religion as something separate from public life arose in the wake of the sixteenth-century Reformation and the so-called Wars of Religion in the seventeenth century. The English philosopher John Locke gave voice to the modern Western notion of religion. Locke argued that religion was a ‘private search’ and as such could not be policed by the government; in this personal quest everyone was to rely on ‘his own endeavours’ rather than an external authority. To mingle ‘religion’ and politics was a grievous, dangerous and existential error:

The church itself is a thing absolutely separate and distinct from the commonwealth. The boundaries on both sides are fixed and immovable. He jumbles heaven and earth together, the things most remote and opposite, who mixes two societies, which are in their original end, business, and in everything perfectly and infinitely different from each other.²⁸

Locke assumed that the separation of religion and politics was inherent in the nature of things. Armstrong argues that ‘because of the violent passions it supposedly unleashed, Locke insisted that the segregation of “religion” from government was “above all things necessary” for the creation of a peaceful society.’²⁹ In other words, keep religion out of government. Separate the church from the state. Karen Armstrong concludes: ‘In Locke we see the birth of the “myth of religious violence” that would become ingrained in the Western ethos.’³⁰ Society is maintained in peace when religion is kept in the private domain.

Armstrong is not alone in this assessment. A leading American Catholic theologian, William Cavanaugh, in his remarkable book, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, agrees.³¹ He discusses the ‘invention of religion’ and the ‘creation myth of the Wars of Religion.’ He argues that the separation of religion from political life on the pretext of its inherent violence serves a darker purpose. Not only does it provide the foundation for the sovereign nation state to separate from religion; at the same time it provides a mask for violence perpetrated by sovereign states. If it is religion that is prone to violence then whatever violent action is sanctioned by the nation state will be more easily justified as an act necessary for the protection and survival of the people. State-sanctioned violence will only ever be consequentially violent; it is not inherent to the character of the state as such. Controversial? Perhaps. But let history be the arbiter. As Cavanaugh shows, ‘attempts to separate religious violence from secular violence are incoherent.’³² It’s all in the mix, so to speak.

Separating religion from the nation state is one thing. But the real problem arises when the nation state claims the public space and religion is relegated to the private realm. This is a common assumption and perception about religion in a secular liberal democracy. Religion is a private matter; it is *passé*, irrational and essentially finished. I think of the media report on 11 February 2016 regarding the comment by the newly appointed chief of the CSIRO to the effect that the politics of climate change seems more like religion than science. He meant, I presume, the outcry from climate scientists and others reacting to the cuts to the budget of the CSIRO and loss of jobs. In other words, the strong response had all the hallmarks of the secular view of religion as emotive and irrational, no doubt a popular perception today.

Because we are a liberal society we tolerate religion as long as it remains where it belongs. There is another dangerous dimension to this. For example, by locating religion in the private sphere we become blind to the deeper reality that a sovereign nation has in effect become another religion—a total way of life through which our everyday world is ordered. It matters not whether it is nationalism, capitalism, Marxism, liberalism or a host of other secular ideologies and institutions. This new idolatry proves itself anything but benign in its use of force in the pursuit of justice. Whose religion indeed are we signed up for? Which violence are we really sanctioning? These are uncomfortable questions that lurk not far below our modern discontents and political narratives.

Private religion: wither the praise of God?

The question of whether religion is an inherently dangerous idea remains contested. However, I have argued that the privatisation of religion is a dangerous idea. Specifically it is dangerous because of its impact on the human desire to offer a praise of God. In what follows I identify three reasons why private religion is a dangerous idea in relation to the praise of God—in short, why private religion is bad news for the good news.

Praise of God is cocooned: the case of 'soul religion'

In private religion, faith is quarantined in a holding room called 'soul' reality. This is not unfamiliar to us. Religion and faith belong in the private sphere, not the public sphere. At first sight this appears to have a number of distinct advantages in anxious and uncertain times.

First, it offers a protected space for the harassed and overwhelmed individuals of the Western world. This is a region where I can be truly alone with God, however I might conceive this God to be. There is no shortage of resources to infuse this soul space with meaning, strength and purpose. If you are in doubt just visit any bookstore. The self-help industry trades on this protected domain. Preachers play to it; the Word of God is fed into this region of the person and fills it up and strengthens it for surviving in the public space of work, family, politics, business or whatever.

Second, it provides the basis for multiple religions, none of which can intrude into the public spaces of contemporary life. They can proliferate yet remain sealed off from one another and/or the public and political domains of life. In this way religious pluralism can flourish in a secular liberal

democracy within certain boundaries (the private worlds of individuals and religious communities). And, in principle, freedom of religion operating in this particular way is enshrined in Section 116 of the Australian Constitution:

The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth.³³

Third, the privatisation of religion in the context of contemporary Western 'expressive individualism' means that the unending search for the sacred and the 'quest type spiritual culture' of the West has generated a veritable smorgasbord of competing spiritualities characterised as 'pick and mix' spirituality.³⁴ This transcends traditional institutional forms of religion and national/ethnic boundaries. We might be able to speak of a truly cosmopolitan religious environment with multiple hybrid forms of spiritual offerings. This includes a shift from on-line religion to 'religion online'; a focus on 'world religions' with a global consciousness of a system of religions. This entails a shift from understanding religion in terms of 'ancient religious cultures'. It seems that the gods and deities of the ancient world have reappeared in new and fresh forms, and remain deeply attractive as elements of the spiritual quest.

Praise of God is colonised: the case of religious ideology

Private religion provides the breeding grounds for the development of counter-religious ideologies for the purpose of retrieving the public space for religion. This may appear benign, but it is the breeding ground for fundamentalisms of various kinds. Religious fundamentalism, like most fundamentalisms, is a response to failure. It gathers energy from the dualism inherent in the private/public dichotomy. In this duality there is rarely a place for compromise. This in fact is seen as the problem. On this view religion has been marginalised, sold out; it is the result of far too many compromises. What is required is a strong counter-movement, an assertive brand of religion that seeks influence in the public space. And often the ends justify the means. The brand of mission and evangelism associated with this kind of religious response to the privatisation of religion is easily identified. It generates an 'over-againstness' type of faith. It trades on dualities. It feeds off a negative assessment of

the world and consequentially of creation. It has more in common with the general ethos of modernity that is deeply Manichean, namely that the world is a dangerous and evil place. The priority is providing a means of escape into a protected soul space in eternal time. Moreover, the means by which this removal is effected is deeply infected with the habits of a consumerist/business/entertainment culture. In this sense it is deeply Pelagian: salvation becomes the new great work to be achieved with all the cunning and craft of the world. The Pelagian turn is well documented in John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge's insightful book, *God is Back: How the Global Rise of Faith is Changing the World*.³⁵

The de-materialisation of praise: disembodied faith

A third reason why private religion is bad news for the good news is that it comes from a stable other than Christianity! A stable of straw is a key locus for an embodied, vulnerable and sacramental faith. Religion as soul faith, private space, is basically dualistic: two worlds apart; false dichotomies; a truncated and disembodied religion. Christian faith cannot be compartmentalised, quarantined or hermetically sealed off from the public space. Jesus was not crucified because he lived in a stable but because he taught, argued, healed, debated, offended and challenged the powers that occupied the public spaces such as the temple. A sacramental faith is an embodied, concrete and public faith. Anything less makes a mockery of the incarnation of the Lord. How the church follows the mission of God in the public space; how it tells the good news in that space—these are the issues that ought to be at the forefront of our thinking, praying and engagements.

Beyond private religion: recovering the public space for a public faith

We are at present witnessing an opening up of the public space. There are fresh opportunities for a new moral and global ethic; a new atmosphere which requires a cooperative global ethos to address common issues; a time for a renewed inter-religious dialogue; a new inter-religious witness. And this will in turn require the churches of the one church of God to reconsider their ecumenical life together. The privatisation of religion, an offspring of the European Enlightenment, is a dangerous idea that has run its course. Bryan Turner, a leading sociologist of religion, refers to 'the eruption of the religious in the public sphere'.³⁶ He notes that '[t]he privatisation of religion—the cornerstone of the liberal view of tolerance in the legacy of

John Locke—is thought by many observers to be no longer a viable political strategy in the separation of state and religion.¹³⁷

The opening up of the public space in all its confusions and tensions is—not simply a quirk of social and political history—it is that, but there is more to it. Theologically we are to discern these times as a new prising open of public space; a new crack or fissure in modernity is opening up, through which the breath of the eternal Spirit might just be blowing. The praise of God cannot forever be silenced, diminished or colonised by alien idolatries; the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never comprehended, overcome or snuffed it out.

Anglicanism has a long history of engagement in the public space. A key person in the nineteenth century was Frederick Denison Maurice (1805–72). He hailed from the broad church. His abiding focus was God in society; his was a very public and incarnational faith. It got him into trouble on a few occasions. The Maurice tradition has strong echoes in Australian Anglicanism. Perhaps one of the most significant figures in this tradition was a former bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, Ernest Burgmann. He came from the Manning Valley. There is a photo of the young Burgmann felling trees. He was an educationalist, institutional builder and prophetic voice for an enculturated and public Christianity. The Prime Minister of the day referred to him in Parliament as ‘that meddlesome priest.’ What more could you ask for? Burgmann believed that the public space was the place for the church’s mission because that’s where God was working.

In recent decades in Australia the public space has re-emerged as the place for a fresh mission and a space for the creative rehearsing of an ancient wisdom in word and deed. This new public space for religion and faith is a contested and often fractious space. As the writer of Proverbs tells us: ‘At the crossroads wisdom takes her stand’ (Pro. 8). This is not an easy space, but it is the space where a fresh praise of God might arise. This new context is the great challenge for Christian dialogue and witness. It is the place where a fresh wisdom and praise of God has to be found. The dynamic of private religion is fundamentally antithetical to such a development. In terms of the emergence of a rich and attractive praise of God in the everyday matters of the world, such a privatised religion is fundamentally a dangerous idea.

Endnotes

1. Roy J Eidelson & Judy I Eidelson, 'Dangerous Ideas: Five Beliefs That Propel Groups Toward Conflict', *American Psychologist*, March 2003, pp. 182–92.
2. Eidelson and Eidelson, *Dangerous Ideas*, p. 182.
3. D Keltner and R J Robinson, 'Extremism, power, and the imagined basis of social conflict', *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, Vol. 5, 1996, pp. 101–05, at p. 101, quoted in Eidelson and Eidelson, *Dangerous Ideas*, p. 182.
4. St Augustine, *Confessions*.
5. Quoted in Doris Donnelly, 'Impediments to Praise in the Worshipping Community', *Worship*, Vol. 66, 1992, p. 39.
6. Quoted in Jacob Neusner, *To Grow in Wisdom: An Anthology of Abraham Joshua Heschel*, Madison Books, New York, 1990, p. 190.
7. Karen Armstrong, *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence*, Penguin and Random House, London, 2014.
8. Armstrong, *Fields of Blood*, p. 1.
9. Armstrong, *Fields of Blood*, p. 1.
10. Armstrong, *Fields of Blood*, p. 3.
11. Armstrong, *Fields of Blood*, p. 359.
12. Jonathan Sacks, *Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 2015.
13. Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, p. 3.
14. Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, p. 3.
15. Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, p. 3.
16. Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, p. 9.
17. Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, p. 10.
18. Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, p. 21.
19. Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, p. 21.
20. Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, p. 23.
21. Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, p. 25.
22. Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, p. 200.
23. Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, p. 200.
24. Sacks, *Not in God's Name*, p. 17.
25. See René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, trans. by Raymond Schwagger as *Must There Be Scapegoats*, HarperCollins, New York, 1987 [1986].
26. Armstrong, *Fields of Blood*, p. 2.

27. Armstrong, *Fields of Blood*, p. 3.
28. Quoted in Armstrong, *Fields of Blood*, p. 236.
29. Armstrong, *Fields of Blood*, p. 236.
30. Armstrong, *Fields of Blood*, p. 236.
31. William Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009.
32. Cavanaugh, *Myth of Religious Violence*, p. 3.
33. Section 116 has four limbs. The first three limbs prohibit the Commonwealth from making certain laws: laws 'for establishing any religion'; laws 'for imposing any religious observance'; and laws 'for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion'. The fourth limb proscribes the imposition of religious tests to qualify for any Commonwealth office or public trust. Only the 'establishing religion' and 'prohibiting free exercise' limbs have been the subject of cases before the High Court.
34. See Bryan S Turner, *Religion and Modern Society: Citizenship, Secularisation and the State*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011, for an insightful introduction to the contemporary situation regarding religion and spirituality.
35. J Micklethwait and A Wooldridge, *God is Back: How the Global Rise of Faith is Changing the World*, Penguin, New York and London, 2010.
36. Turner, *Religion and Modern Society*, p. x.
37. Turner, *Religion and Modern Society*, p. 105.