ANDREW PRESTON

# Bridging the Gap between the Sacred and the Secular in the History of American Foreign Relations*

With the eruption of global hostilities between two universalistic, mutually exclusive ideologies, the president of the United States sought to rally Americans, and people around the world, to the cause of spreading freedom and democracy. What was most striking about his rhetoric was its explicit grounding in religious dogma and imagery. "The defense of mankind against these attacks," the president told an audience at the onset of the crisis, "lies in the faith we profess—the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God." "Democracy," he proclaimed three years later in the midst of an increasingly unpopular, stalemated war, "is first and foremost a spiritual force." At a subsequent occasion, he warned against complacency because "we are under tremendous attacks" and stressed that Americans must remain vigilant and "establish the fervor, the strength of our convictions, because fundamentally Democracy is nothing in the world but a spiritual conviction, a conviction that each of us is enormously valuable because of a certain standing before our own God." Finally, later still, when it was clear that the global struggle would last years, if not decades, the president informed the American people that although he had "sworn before you and Almighty God the same oath our forebears prescribed" in the eighteenth century, "the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe—the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God."

These are familiar words to the collective post-9/11 sensibility. Yet they come not from the speeches of George W. Bush on terrorism and Iraq, but from the Cold War rhetoric of Presidents Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and John F. Kennedy.[1] Indeed, it is the use of gendered language—"brotherhood of

*My thanks to Seth Jacobs, Lynne Marks, Mark Noll, Gagan Sood, Elizabeth Vibert, and the journal's anonymous reviewers for their very helpful and constructive criticism of earlier versions of this essay. I also benefited greatly from presenting versions of this article to the International Security Studies Colloquium, Yale University, February 2006 and the Conference on Religious History, Boston College, March 2006.

1. The four quotations are from, respectively, Harry S. Truman, "Address at a Luncheon of the National Conference of Christians and Jews," November 11, 1949, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1949* (Washington, DC, 1964), 563; Harry S. Truman, "Remarks in Alexandria, Va., at the Cornerstone Laying of the Westminster Presbyterian Church," November 23, 1952, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1952–1953* (Washington,

Diplomatic History, Vol. 30, No. 5 (November 2006).  Published by Blackwell Publishing, Inc., 350 Main Street, Malden, MA, 02148, USA and 9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK.

man," "Fatherhood of God," and "rights of man"—rather than religious rhetoric that makes these declarations sound anachronistic. That the words of Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy could have been uttered today—or, indeed, at almost any other moment of national crisis in American history—demonstrates their continuing resonance and relevance. Particularly striking is the continuing integral role of religion in the formation, execution, and justification of American foreign policy. The importance of religion to American public life, including U.S. foreign policy, is further illustrated by the fact that although they espoused the same message, Truman (a devout Baptist who rarely attended church), Eisenhower (a nominal Presbyterian but in reality a nondenominational mainline Protestant), Kennedy (a moderate Catholic), and Bush (an evangelical Southern Methodist) all adhered to different denominations and held different religious beliefs.[2] Yet while diplomatic historians have been quick to point out the essential continuities between Bush's post-9/11 foreign policy and the traditions of American war and diplomacy, the influence of religion in this process has been relatively neglected and generally unrecognized.[3]

In making the case for religion, terminology is important—both for methodological and historiographical purposes—and so a working definition of religion is in order. What do I mean when I say that diplomatic historians need to pay more attention to religion? What exactly is "religion" anyway? Unlike

---

DC, 1966), 1063; Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Remarks to the First National Conference on the Spiritual Foundations of American Democracy," November 9, 1954, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954* (Washington, DC, 1960), 1031; and John F. Kennedy, "Inaugural Address," January 20, 1961, *Public Papers of the Presidents: John F. Kennedy, 1961* (Washington, DC, 1962), 1.

2. On Truman's religion, see Alonzo L. Hamby, *Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman* (New York, 1995), 21, 474. On Eisenhower's, see Herbert S. Parmet, *Eisenhower and the American Crusades* (New York, 1972), 22–23, 164; Peter Lyon, *Eisenhower: Portrait of the Hero* (Boston, 1974), 22–23, 164; Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, vol. 1, *1890–1952* (New York, 1983), 19–20, 24, 36; and Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, vol. 2, *The President* (New York, 1984), 38. On Kennedy's, see Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York, 1965), 19–20, 108–13, 126–27, 136–48, 175–76, 186–95, 217–23; Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917–1963* (Boston, 2003), 59, 86–87, 146–47, 205, 227–96 passim, 687, 701–6; and Thomas J. Carty, *A Catholic in the White House? Religion, Politics, and John F. Kennedy's Presidential Campaign* (New York, 2004). For brief religious biographies of all three, see John Sutherland Bonnell, *Presidential Profiles: Religion in the Life of American Presidents* (Philadelphia, 1971), 212–30. On the religious underpinnings of the foreign policies of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, see William Inboden, "The Soul of American Diplomacy: Religion and Foreign Policy, 1945–1960" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2003).

3. Two prominent diplomatic historians have emphasized continuity over change in placing Bush's foreign policy in historical perspective. For such analysis that is largely critical of the Bush administration, see Melvyn P. Leffler, "Bush's Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy* 144 (September/October 2004): 22–28; and Melvyn P. Leffler, "9/11 and American Foreign Policy," *Diplomatic History* 29 (June 2005): 395–413. For such analysis that is largely supportive, see John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Cambridge, MA, 2004). For an emphasis on continuity that is both critical and laudatory, see Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Price of America's Empire* (New York, 2004). For a persuasive analysis that argues the opposite—that Bush's foreign policy has been a radical departure from the American diplomatic tradition—see Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC, 2003).

"ideology," which is infamously difficult to define with any precision and means different things to scholars from different disciplines, religion can be described in a fairly straightforward, comprehensive fashion despite its incredible diffusion and diversity.[4] All religions are based on tenets of belief that are invisible, hierarchical, organized, and transcendent. In other words: people place their faith in an unverifiable, unseen god (or gods); this deity is supreme over all life on earth; the adherents' faith is usually channeled through some form of established liturgy or worship within the institutional framework of a church, mosque, synagogue, or the like; and their faith is thought to transcend, and even permeate, mortal, earthly concerns.[5] But above all (so to speak), the most basic characteristic of religion is a belief in a higher being, a supreme otherworldly authority to whom ultimate allegiance is owed.

Due to its many applications, one of the main difficulties historians have with religion is not determining what it is, but rather determining how to *limit* what it is. For example, should a study of religion focus on concepts of "morality," even if those concepts are no longer explicitly religious? Should it include "civil religion"—a societal phenomenon in the United States that Gunnar Myrdal referred to as "the American Creed" and Will Herberg described as a quasi-official "American Way of Life" that "provides the framework in terms of which the crucial values of American existence are couched"—which is sometimes purely religious, sometimes purely secular, and sometimes an impure mixture of both?[6] Should it include "lived religion," a category which does not necessarily entail the institutional apparatus normally associated with definitions of religion?[7] Ideally, diplomatic historians would embrace all of these approaches. But

---

4. At least straightforward for historians' purposes because a definition of religion is neither an objective in itself nor a means to provide a general theory to explain why people are religious. The work of anthropologists, sociologists, and religious philosophers, whose attempts to define religion are centered around both these purposes, illustrates that defining religion is not an inherently easy task. Witness the work of Pascal Boyer, a leading social anthropologist who argues that while religion as a general phenomenon is universal and innate, it is also indefinable. See especially his *The Naturalness of Religious Ideas: A Cognitive Theory of Religion* (Berkeley, CA, 1994). On the interdisciplinary controversy over how to define religion, see Peter B. Clarke and Peter Byrne, *Religion Defined and Explained* (New York, 1993), 3–27. On efforts to devise a general theory of religion, see Stewart Elliott Guthrie, "Religion: What Is It?" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 35 (December 1996): 412–19.

5. My own definition, which can apply equally to the work of theologians (who tend to accept the general naturalness of religion) and anthropologists and sociologists (who tend to perceive religion as a particular social or cultural construct), loosely follows that of Walter Burkert, *Creation of the Sacred: Tracks of Biology in Early Religions* (Cambridge, MA, 1996), esp. 4–8, 80–81.

6. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York, 1944), passim; Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology*, rev. ed. (Garden City, NY, 1960), 75. The literature on civil religion—which overlaps considerably with those of political culture, exceptionalism, and nationalism—is simply too vast even to summarize here. But in the American context, the pioneering work is Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," in *Religion in America*, eds. William G. McLoughlin and Robert N. Bellah (Boston, 1968), 3–23.

7. "Lived religion" is a form of the social history of religion, and refers to how ordinary people, as opposed to ecclesiastical and institutional authorities, practice their faith. For the

in the interests of clarity, by "religion" I am referring to the readily identifiable religious affiliations and values that people hold. "Religious," then, describes those Americans who profess faith in a higher, spiritual god and belong to a recognized denomination or faith, be it Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and so forth. Such an examination includes civil religion only when it specifically appropriates the values and rituals of an actual, faith-based religion.[8] And such an approach includes lived religion only when it has obvious causal utility in explaining the history of American foreign relations.

Independently, religion and foreign relations are two of the most important and exhaustively studied aspects of American history. Religion has consistently been one of the dominant forces in shaping American culture, politics, economics, and national identity. Indeed, the United States is the only major industrialized democracy where religion is as salient today as it was three centuries ago. America's engagement with the world has had a similarly profound effect on virtually all facets of national life. Moreover, since at least the Seven Years' War, and certainly since the Revolution, American foreign relations have shaped people and events within and beyond North America. Religion and foreign relations, then, are two subjects that have not only been instrumental to the study of American history, they have also played an instrumental role in making both the United States and the world what they are today.

And yet, despite some specific exceptions that prove the general rule, these two great disciplines are rarely, if ever, comprehensively or effectively bridged.[9] When they have actually bothered to do so, historians of American foreign relations have utilized religion much as a diner would use a menu, selecting specific items that bring immediate but passing fulfillment. In other words, diplomatic historians will often briefly, idiosyncratically, and opportunistically highlight the role of certain individuals or incidents—say, foreign missionaries or the religious faith of certain American leaders—but specific, singular case studies apart, they have not, in general, deployed religion as an overall theory or

---

best examples, see Robert A. Orsi, *Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880–1950* (New Haven, CT, 1985); Robert A. Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes* (New Haven, CT, 1996); and Robert A. Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton, NJ, 2005).

8. For an excellent example of this approach, see Jeffrey F. Meyer, *Myths in Stone: Religious Dimensions of Washington, D.C.* (Berkeley, CA, 2001).

9. The most notable exceptions are Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago, 1968); Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York, 1995); Kevin Phillips, *The Cousins' Wars: Religion, Politics, and the Triumph of Anglo-America* (New York, 1999); Andrew J. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds: The United States and India, 1947–1964* (Ithaca, NY, 2000); Seth Jacobs, *America's Miracle Man in Vietnam: Ngo Dinh Diem, Religion, Race, and U.S. Intervention in Southeast Asia, 1950–1957* (Durham, NC, 2004); and, from the field of American studies, Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945*, rev. ed. (Berkeley, CA, 2005).

method to examine America's role in the world. "Political and diplomatic historians," Leo P. Ribuffo, one of the few historians successfully to bridge matters of church and state, points out, "almost never know the work of such important [religious] scholars as George M. Marsden and Mark Noll."[10]

There is no simple, single explanation as to why this is so, although three possibilities come to mind: partisanship and advocacy; secularization; and empirical and methodological difficulty. First, partisanship and advocacy. With the demise of liberal religion and its replacement by evangelical Protestantism and conservative Catholicism in the United States, and with the dramatic growth of fundamentalist religions elsewhere in the world, the very subject of religion might simply seem too partisan or controversial. Moreover, the admission requirements to the study of religion often appear dauntingly high to the irreligious. For example, many scholars who study the history of American religion—such as Mark Noll, Joel A. Carpenter, and Paul Boyer—are themselves religious or have a religious background, creating an impression that faith is a prerequisite for scholarship.[11] Because of this tightly knit community of scholars, and because religion is so personal, people often assume that someone writing on religion must have a religious view to advance. Religion is thus mistakenly seen not as a topic or a theory, but as an agenda.

This absence is not without precedent in the writing of U.S. diplomatic history. Consider the absence in the discipline, until recently, of ideology. Most Americans do not think of themselves as ideological because ideology, as Anders Stephanson puts it, is always "something the other guy does."[12] Or, as Sacvan Bercovitch says about the writing of consensus history during the Cold War, Americanists "denied that America had any ideology at all, since ideology meant dogma, bigotry, and repression; whereas Americans," in contrast to the Communists of the Soviet Union, China, and elsewhere, "were open-minded, inclusive, and eclectic."[13] Thus labeling someone as "ideological"—or "religious"—is akin to calling them "radical" because the term often implies a certain lack of reasonableness, detachment, objectivity, or rationality. Perhaps because of the long dominance of the theories of realism and rational choice in international relations and diplomatic history, it is this irrationality that political and diplomatic historians often resist.

---

10. Leo P. Ribuffo, "Afterword: Cultural Shouting Matches and the Academic Study of American Religious History," in *Religious Advocacy and American History*, eds. Bruce Kuklick and D. G. Hart (Grand Rapids, MI, 1997), 222.

11. Stephen Tuck, "The New American Histories," *Historical Journal* 48 (September 2005): 828.

12. Anders Stephanson, "Rethinking Cold War History," *Review of International Studies* 24 (January 1998): 122. See also Anders Stephanson, "Ideology and Neorealist Mirrors," *Diplomatic History* 17 (Spring 1993): 285–95; and Odd Arne Westad, "The New International History of the Cold War," *Diplomatic History* 24 (Fall 2000): 553–54.

13. Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Rites of Assent: Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of America* (New York, 1993), 13.

Second, and related, is secularization. As humanists who strive for objectivity through empiricism, diplomatic historians often instinctually separate matters of church and state. The processes of diversification and secularization—which began in the nineteenth century and supposedly transformed the United States into a "post-Protestant," "post-Puritan," and "post-Christian" nation[14]—have been partly responsible for the lack of religion in the political and diplomatic history of modern America, mostly because modern historians believe in secularization as much as they believe that secularization has actually occurred.[15] As Nathan O. Hatch, a historian of early American religion, argues, "the modern distinction between sacred and secular has allowed the studies of religion and politics to go their separate ways in virtual isolation."[16] Andrew J. Rotter, a diplomatic historian who himself uses religion, concurs. "American scholars have usually resisted interpreting U.S. foreign policy as a product of religious thinking," he notes. "The idea makes many Americans uncomfortable, for we are supposed to live in a country where politics and religion do not mix."[17] And because of the general correlation between higher levels of education and lower levels of religiosity, it probably makes academics especially uncomfortable.[18] For many historians, then, injecting religion into their work might seem to be a rejection of secularization, and perhaps even too close an embrace of proselytizing.[19]

But in strikingly ahistorical fashion, this deliberate neglect refuses to engage historical figures on their own terms. It explicitly addresses historians' concerns and rejects what was important to people of the past. It refuses, in other words, to take religion seriously.[20] Interestingly, the same phenomenon has affected other historical fields. For most of the twentieth century, for example, historians of the Crusades eschewed religion and emphasized plunder, politics, and conquest as the Crusaders' primary motivations. Now, however, perhaps under the

---

14. These phrases are from, respectively, Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, CT, 1972), 12, 965; and Harold Bloom, *American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York, 1992).

15. For a more detailed discussion, see David A. Hollinger, "The 'Secularization' Question and the United States in the Twentieth Century," *Church History* 70 (March 2001): 132–43.

16. Nathan O. Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven, CT, 1977), 3.

17. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds*, 220.

18. On the inverse relationship between levels of religion and education in postwar America, see Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II* (Princeton, NJ, 1988), 168–71.

19. For precisely such a warning—to keep the sacred and secular apart in order to guard against religious advocacy—see Murray G. Murphey, "Advocacy and Academe," in Kuklick and Hart, eds., *Religious Advocacy and American History*, 65–80. Some religious historians have compounded the problem by explicitly calling for the injection of religious values into the university curriculum in order to overcome religion's relative neglect by usually secularist academics. See especially George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York, 1992).

20. On this point, see Robert A. Orsi, "The Disciplinary Vocabulary of Modernity," *International Journal* 59 (Autumn 2004): 879–85.

influence of religion's dramatic return to world politics since 9/11, historians of the Crusades are once again stressing that it was the sacred rather than the secular that primarily drove the Crusaders eastward.[21] As the example of Crusades history demonstrates, much has changed since Hatch was writing in 1977. But while international relations theorists and historians working in other fields, from the Crusades to transatlantic slavery to postwar American politics, have in recent years begun to stress the religious influence, diplomatic historians have been slow to accept this change and adopt religion as a subject or theory of historical inquiry.

Third, empirical and methodological difficulty. Religion may perhaps appear to be too diffuse, unwieldy, and imprecise for methodologically traditional diplomatic historians to integrate usefully into their work. Perhaps more than other fields, diplomatic history seeks to identify an explicit relationship between cause and effect to explain how and why Americans interact with the world in the manner they do. And linking such causality with ideas, culture, and values is no easy feat. As Gordon A. Craig notes in an oft-quoted observation on ideology that applies equally to values and religion: "To establish the relationship between ideas and foreign policy is always a difficult task, and it is no accident that it has attracted so few historians."[22] Similarly, in his attempt to trace the relationship among religious, intellectual, and social history, Bruce Kuklick states simply: "Sometimes ideas fit the social order, sometimes they do not; at no time is the connection simple, and occasionally it cannot be fathomed."[23]

With an amorphous and often undocumented phenomenon such as religion, then, causation becomes a key problem for the diplomatic historian, as two renowned scholars have noted in pointing out shortcomings in the field's increasingly popular cultural and social models.[24] After all, while religion has obviously shaped the national agenda in certain eras—the 1740s, 1810s, 1850s, 1890s, and 1950s spring immediately to mind—the United States has never waged a holy war or launched a religious crusade. Since winning independence from the British, U.S. officials may sometimes have been influenced by religion, but were they actually driven by a divine calling? While one could reasonably argue that, say, war with Spain in 1898 was motivated by the search for overseas

---

21. See, for example, Christopher Tyerman, *Fighting for Christendom: Holy War and the Crusades* (New York, 2004); Thomas Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History* (New York, 2004); and Jonathan Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople* (London, 2004).

22. Gordon A. Craig, "Political and Diplomatic History," in *Historical Studies Today*, eds. Felix Gilbert and Stephen R. Graubard (New York, 1972), 362. See also Michael H. Hunt, "Ideology," in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, ed. Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson (New York, 2004), 227–28.

23. Bruce Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey* (New Haven, CT, 1985), 255.

24. Melvyn P. Leffler, "New Approaches, Old Interpretations, and Prospective Configurations," *Diplomatic History* 19 (Spring 1995): 180–85; Robert Buzzanco, "What Happened to the New Left? Toward a Radical Reading of American Foreign Relations," *Diplomatic History* 23 (January 1999): 585–88; Robert Buzzanco, "Where's the Beef? Culture without Power in the Study of U.S. Foreign Relations," *Diplomatic History* 24 (January 2000): 623–32.

markets, or that the CIA's role in the 1953 overthrow of Iranian leader Mohammed Mossadeq was motivated by a desire to secure access to oil, or that military intervention in Vietnam a decade later was driven by a fear of communism, Americans have never gone to war to spread the gospel. How, then, does one even begin to unravel the exceedingly complicated and frequently untraceable relationship between the sacred and the secular? How does one pinpoint causation? Such concerns, however, should be viewed skeptically: the emergence of many innovative studies in diplomatic history that use other supposedly amorphous modes of analysis, such as gender and culture, illustrates that otherwise valid concerns over causation can be misplaced and exaggerated.

Whatever the actual reasons, the interplay between religious faith and public life is, as Paul T. McCartney points out, "an aspect of American identity that is mistakenly ignored in most foreign policy analyses."[25] While important exceptions to the general rule are noted below, overall the result among diplomatic historians is an odd agnosticism about the place of religion in the history of American foreign relations. Traditionally, secular concerns have dominated the discipline. Diplomatic historians have long argued that the United States wages its wars and conducts its foreign policy in pursuit of rational, tangible, or political goals—to attain or promote power, security, democracy, or trade and economic profit.[26] As useful as they remain, however, these traditional explanations do not always illuminate the values that inform and shape these policies. More recently, over the last decade, American diplomatic historians have begun to apply innovative theories, borrowed from other disciplines and fields, in their examinations of the history of American foreign relations. Among the most influential and popular of these new theories, rubrics, and methodologies are gender and sexuality, cultural hegemony, values and norms, cultural and educational exchange, the role of nongovernmental organizations, the arts, race, and postcolonialism. These theories face the same methodological obstacles of linking cause and effect that challenge the utility of religion, yet through their ingenuity and sophistication they have nonetheless been able to transform our understanding of American diplomatic history.

Yet despite this vibrant and exciting new theoretical and methodological mosaic there seems to be no space left for religion. As a systematic rubric under which various moments in the history of American foreign relations, or the whole history itself, can be analyzed and explained, religion has been sorely

---

25. Paul T. McCartney, "American Nationalism and U.S. Foreign Policy from September 11 to the Iraq War," *Political Science Quarterly* 119 (October 2004): 401.

26. Prominent examples of these traditional but by no means obsolete schools of thought are, respectively, Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA, 1992); John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York, 1982); Tony Smith, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ, 1994); and Thomas J. McCormick, *America's Half-Century: United States Foreign Policy in the Cold War* (Baltimore, 1989).

neglected and is rarely a lens through which historians examine America's role in the world. For example, four of the standard historiographical guides to the field of U.S. diplomatic history explore a wide variety of methodological and theoretical schools to explain what drives American foreign policy—including, among several others, realism, bureaucratic politics, corporatism, world systems theory, gender, ideology, and race—but not religion. Indeed, "religion" does not even appear in any of their indexes.[27] Similarly, most of the major broad, thematic syntheses of American foreign relations do not address the role of religion, even when they purport to discuss explicitly religious themes (which have, to be sure, become secularized through popular acceptance and usage), such as "providence" and "mission" or values that in large part have explicitly religious origins, such as "human rights."[28] Military historians have been similarly remiss.[29] Such neglect becomes stranger still when one considers that many diplomatic historians, even those who built their careers understating the importance of ideas and ideology—such as John Lewis Gaddis and Melvyn P. Leffler—now recognize that intangible, cultural, and value-laden factors were essential to the unfolding of the Cold War.[30] But while historians bemoan the absence of

---

27. Gerald K. Haines and J. Samuel Walker, eds., *American Foreign Relations: A Historiographical Review* (Westport, CT, 1981), 366; Michael J. Hogan, ed., *America in the World: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations since 1941* (New York, 1995), 614; Michael J. Hogan, ed., *Paths to Power: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations to 1941* (New York, 2000), 301; Robert D. Schulzinger, ed., *A Companion to American Foreign Relations* (Oxford, 2003), 558; Hogan and Paterson, *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 363. However, all of these guides do examine, to some extent, the role of American missionaries overseas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

28. See, for example, Felix Gilbert, *To the Farewell Address: Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ, 1961); Alexander DeConde, *A History of American Foreign Policy*, 2d ed. (New York, 1971); Morrell Heald and Lawrence S. Kaplan, *Culture and Diplomacy: The American Experience* (Westport, CT, 1977), although there is a discussion of missionaries; Cecil V. Crabb, Jr., *The Doctrines of American Foreign Policy: Their Meaning, Role, and Future* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1982); Robert Dallek, *The American Style of Foreign Policy: Cultural Politics and Foreign Affairs* (New York, 1983); Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT, 1987); Thomas G. Paterson, *Meeting the Communist Threat: Truman to Reagan* (New York, 1988); Warren I. Cohen, ed., *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, 4 vols. (New York, 1993); and David Ryan, *US Foreign Policy in World History* (London, 2000). For an example of "providence," see Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (New York, 2001). For examples of "mission," see Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation* (New York, 1963); and Smith, *America's Mission*. For an example of "human rights," see Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge, MA, 2005).

29. For broad overviews of American military history that do not include religion, see, for example, Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA, 1957); James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York, 1988); John Morgan Dederer, *War in America to 1775: Before Yankee Doodle* (New York, 1990); and Fred Anderson and Andrew Cayton, *The Dominion of War: Empire and Liberty in North America, 1500–2000* (New York, 2005).

30. For Gaddis's emphasis on Communist ideology, see his *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York, 1997), esp. 289–91. For Leffler's reappraisal of ideology's importance, see his article "Bringing It Together: The Parts and the Whole," in *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory*, ed. Odd Arne Westad (London, 2000), 44–47.

other theories and models, none has been as systematically overlooked as religion.[31]

For their part, historians of American religion have been little better in bridging this gap.[32] Granted, it is perhaps easier to trace religion's influence on foreign policy than it is foreign policy's influence on religion. In this sense, one can probably more readily identify the impact of a general and diffuse phenomenon (religion) on a relatively specific subject (foreign affairs) than the other way around. The sheer number of variables decreases as one's focus narrows and, as a result, cause and effect stand in sharper relief. When historians and political scientists link religion to American public life, therefore, they usually do so on particular matters, such as governance (especially the separation of church and state), political issues (such as faith-based initiatives, electoral dynamics, and social behavior), and popular culture—while completely ignoring foreign relations.[33] Clearly, this approach should also provide fruitful results for the history

---

31. Similar pleas have recently been made on behalf of environmental history and domestic politics. For the former, see John G. Clark, "Making Environmental Diplomacy an Integral Part of Diplomatic History," *Diplomatic History* 21 (Summer 1997): 453–60; and Kurk Dorsey, "Dealing with the Dinosaur (and Its Swamp): Putting the Environment in Diplomatic History," *Diplomatic History* 29 (September 2005): 573–87. For the latter, see Jussi M. Hanhimäki, "Global Visions and Parochial Politics: The Persistent Dilemma of the 'American Century,'" *Diplomatic History* 27 (September 2003): 423–47.

32. One important, albeit partial, exception is the linkage between American Protestantism and imperial continental expansion in Martin E. Marty, *Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America* (New York, 1970), 5–130. Another is Warren L. Vinz, *Pulpit Politics: Faces of American Protestant Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (Albany, NY, 1997).

33. For recent overviews, see Geoffrey Layman, *The Great Divide: Religious and Cultural Conflict in American Party Politics* (New York, 2001); A. James Reichley, *Faith in Politics* (Washington, DC, 2002); Philip Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State* (Cambridge, MA, 2002); Richard Madsen et al., eds., *Meaning and Modernity: Religion, Polity, and Self* (Berkeley, CA, 2002); Robert Wuthnow and John H. Evans, eds., *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism* (Berkeley, CA, 2002); Michael Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America* (Berkeley, CA, 2003); Jason Bivins, *The Fracture of Good Order: Christian Antiliberalism and the Challenge to American Politics* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003); Jon Butler, Grant Wacker, and Randall Balmer, *Religion in American Life: A Short History* (New York, 2003); Hugh Heclo and Wilfred M. McClay, eds., *Religion Returns to the Public Square: Faith and Policy in America* (Baltimore, 2003); William R. Hutchison, *Religious Pluralism in America: The Contentious History of a Founding Idea* (New Haven, CT, 2003); Barbara A. McGraw, *Rediscovering America's Sacred Ground: Public Religion and Pursuit of the Good in a Pluralistic America* (Albany, NY, 2003); John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (New York, 2003); R. Laurence Moore, *Touchdown Jesus: The Mixing of Sacred and Secular in American History* (Louisville, KY, 2003); James A. Morone, *Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History* (New Haven, CT, 2003); Stephen Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon* (New York, 2003); Richard Wightman Fox, *Jesus in America: Personal Savior, Cultural Hero, National Obsession* (New York, 2004); Philip Goff and Paul Harvey, eds., *Themes in Religion and American Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004); Noah Feldman, *Divided by God: America's Church-State Problem—And What We Should Do about It* (New York, 2005); Adam Possamai, *Religion and Popular Culture: A Hyper-Real Testament* (New York, 2005); and Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom* (Princeton, NJ, 2005). See also the special issue, devoted to "Religion in America," of *Public Interest* 155 (Spring 2004). *Daedalus* has published two special issues devoted entirely to questions of religion and public life. But, like the special issue of *Public Interest*, these *Daedalus* issues do not discuss U.S. foreign policy. See "Religion in America," *Daedalus* 96 (Winter 1967) and "Religion and Politics," *Daedalus*

of American foreign relations, yet the field generally stands beyond the range of religious historians. Tellingly, historiographical guides to the study of American religious history do not mention the connections to American war and diplomacy.[34]

The contrast with domestic political, social, and cultural U.S. history could not be more stark. Religion plays a central role in the study of American history from the earliest years of the colonial era to the Civil War; and although it is, as Paul Boyer and Jon Butler have noted, more peripheral to the study of American history since 1865, especially in the twentieth century, scholars have not exactly ignored the influence of religion on domestic history.[35] Americanists have generally recognized, to take but a few examples, the important role religion has played in the evolution of slavery; urban life; reform movements; the development of mass media; and the rise of conservatism to national political dominance in the last forty years.[36] While it still might be superseded by other historical

---

120 (Summer 1991). On secular social, cultural, and political reactions against religion, see Susan Jacoby, *Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism* (New York, 2004); and Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (New York, 2004).

34. See, for example, Edwin S. Gaustad, *Religion in America: History and Historiography* (Washington, DC, 1973); and John F. Wilson, *Religion and the American Nation: Historiography and History* (Athens, GA, 2003). Although it includes a chapter on post-1945 foreign missionaries, another major work of religious historiography otherwise ignores U.S. foreign relations: Harry S. Stout and D. G. Hart, eds., *New Directions in American Religious History* (New York, 1997).

35. Paul Boyer, "In Search of the Fourth 'R': The Treatment of Religion in American History Textbooks and Survey Courses," *History Teacher* 29 (February 1996): 195–216; Jon Butler, "Jack-in-the-Box Faith: The Religion Problem in Modern American History," *Journal of American History* 90 (March 2004): 1357–78.

36. Space prohibits an exhaustive cataloguing, or even a comprehensive summary, of the relevant works that link domestic U.S. history with religion. The following is merely a cursory selection from the most recent literature. For slavery, see John Daly, *When Slavery Was Called Freedom: Evangelicalism, Proslavery, and the Causes of the Civil War* (Lexington, KY, 2002); Rodney Stark, *For the Glory of God: How Monotheism Led to Reformations, Science, Witch-Hunts, and the End of Slavery* (Princeton, NJ, 2003); and, more generally, Harry S. Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War* (New York, 2006). For urban life, see Robert A. Orsi, ed., *Gods of the City: Religion and the American Urban Landscape* (Bloomington, IN, 1999); Miguel A. De La Torre, *La Lucha for Cuba: Religion and Politics on the Streets of Miami* (Berkeley, CA, 2003); and Etan Diamond, *Souls of the City: Religion and the Search for Community in Postwar America* (Bloomington, IN, 2003). For reform movements, see Dan McKanan, *Identifying the Image of God: Radical Christians and Nonviolent Power in the Antebellum United States* (New York, 2002); Andrew C. Rieser, *The Chautauqua Moment: Protestants, Progressives, and the Culture of Modern Liberalism* (New York, 2003); Morone, *Hellfire Nation*; Charles Marsh, *The Beloved Community: How Faith Shapes Social Justice, from the Civil Rights Movement to Today* (New York, 2005); and, more generally, Lucas Swaine, *The Liberal Conscience: Politics and Principle in a World of Religious Pluralism* (New York, 2006). For the media, see Tona J. Hangen, *Redeeming the Dial: Radio, Religion, and Popular Culture in America* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2002); and Quentin J. Schultze, *Christianity and the Mass Media in America: Toward a Democratic Accommodation* (East Lansing, MI, 2003). For the rise of political conservatism, see Kenneth J. Heineman, *God Is a Conservative: Religion, Politics, and Morality in Contemporary America* (New York, 1998); Nina J. Easton, *Gang of Five: Leaders at the Center of the Conservative Crusade* (New York, 2000); Susan Friend Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics* (Princeton, NJ, 2000); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ,

fields, the integration of religious history into larger social, cultural, and political narratives of modern American history has proceeded much farther along than it has in the field of U.S. diplomatic history.

Admittedly, it would be overstating the case to argue that religion has been totally neglected by diplomatic historians and foreign relations specialists. The attacks of September 11, 2001, of course, brought religious motives into explanations of American foreign policy.[37] This had much to do with the views of two fundamentalists: a Muslim, Osama bin Laden, and a Christian, George W. Bush. As a consequence, the literature on current American foreign policy is littered with books on its engagement with the Islamic world. Much of the debate centers on the plaintive question Americans found themselves asking in the immediate aftermath of the attacks: "Why do they hate us?"[38] Answers to this larger question have, in turn, focused on whether the United States (and, by extension for Americans if not necessarily for Europeans and Canadians, "the West") finds itself in a "clash of civilizations" with the Islamic world or whether Islamic militancy has political, rather than religious, roots.[39] More generally, the 9/11 attacks and the Bush administration's response has also triggered a wave of literature on how religion affects international relations.[40] Yet aside from exami-

---

2001); and John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, *The Right Nation: Conservative Power in America* (New York, 2004).

37. See, for example, J. Bryan Hehir et al., *Liberty and Power: A Dialogue on Religion and U.S. Foreign Policy in an Unjust World* (Washington, DC, 2004).

38. The phrase was given prominence, if not exactly coined, by Fareed Zakaria, "Why Do They Hate Us? The Politics of Rage," *Newsweek*, October 15, 2001, 22–40. See especially the section under the subtitle "Enter Religion," 32–35. For a fuller treatment of Zakaria's analysis of religion and international relations, see his *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (New York, 2003), 30–35, 38–42, 59–60, 107–13, 117–55, 205–15, 233–37, 261–62.

39. This famous phrase comes, of course, from a book which was given new life by the 9/11 attacks: Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, 1996). As the University of Chicago political economist Daniel W. Drezner comments on his blog, even though Huntington's thesis is flawed, Drezner's "first intellectual response to the 9/11 attacks was to take it off my bookshelf." See "Great but Wrong Books," http://www.danieldrezner.com/archives/000670.html#000670 (March 28, 2005). For a précis of Huntington's book, albeit one with more nuance and qualification, see Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs* 72 (Summer 1993): 22–49. For a more extreme version of Huntington's thesis, see James C. Bennett, *The Anglosphere Challenge: Why the English-Speaking Nations Will Lead the Way in the Twenty-First Century* (Lanham, MD, 2004). For perspectives on the "root cause" debate, see Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden* (New York, 2001); Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (New York, 2003); and Tore Bjorgo, ed., *Root Causes of Terrorism: Myths, Reality and Ways Forward* (New York, 2005).

40. See, for example, Fabio Petito and Pavlos Hatzopoulos, eds., *Religion in International Relations: The Return from Exile* (New York, 2003); John D. Carlson and Erik C. Owens, eds., *The Sacred and the Sovereign: Religion and International Politics* (Washington, DC, 2003); Douglas Johnston, ed., *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (New York, 2003); Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11* (Chicago, 2003); Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler, eds., *Bringing Religion into International Relations* (New York, 2004); Mary Ann Tétreault and Robert A. Denemark, eds., *Gods, Guns, and Globalization: Religious Radicalism and International Political Economy* (Boulder, CO, 2004); Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (New York, 2004); Micheline R. Ishay, *The History of*

nations of Bush's personal faith, there has been remarkably little sustained analysis, even since 9/11, on putting these religious motivations in U.S. foreign policy in broader historical perspective.

Not all is lost, however. As a brief survey of the literature from both religious and diplomatic history will reveal below, scholars have often blended religion with foreign relations without even realizing it. If diplomatic historians are to organize these works within one coherent school of thought, they should look for guidance to the new social and cultural history of American foreign relations. In fact, despite its revolutionary impact, this "new" social and cultural diplomatic history was not exactly new when it emerged a little over a decade ago. It was a popular, if undisciplined, feature in the literature before the 1990s but had never been codified as a separate school of thought within the historiography. The formally theoretical and empirical use of gender, for example, emerged from the work of Emily Rosenberg, among others, and has been since expanded on and enhanced in ambitious, innovative works such as Frank Costigliola's linkage of concerns with American masculinity to the origins of containment and Robert Dean's analysis of masculinity and the escalation of the Vietnam War.[41] While their scholarly rigor is recent, the links they make between the distorted importance policymakers gave to protecting and preserving their own masculinity and the formation of U.S. foreign policy are not so novel.

Consider David Halberstam's 1972 bestseller *The Best and the Brightest*, in which he emphasizes the central role that the Kennedy administration's cult of masculinity and obsession with toughness played in driving it into Vietnam.[42] Others have said much the same about Lyndon Johnson's decision to commit American troops to the defense of South Vietnam.[43] The influence of the

---

*Human Rights: From Ancient Times to the Globalization Era* (Berkeley, CA, 2004); Malise Ruthven, *Fundamentalism: The Search for Meaning* (Oxford, 2004); and Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, and Philip J. Costopoulos, eds., *World Religions and Democracy* (Baltimore, 2005). This trend was accentuated, but not created, by 9/11. For an important pre-2001 work on the connections between religion and international relations, see Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, eds., *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (New York, 1995). See also Walter A. McDougall, "Religion in World Affairs: Introduction," *Orbis* 42 (Spring 1998): 159–70.

41. Emily S. Rosenberg, "'Foreign Affairs' after World War II: Connecting Sexual and International Politics," *Diplomatic History* 18 (Winter 1994): 59–70; Frank Costigliola, "'Unceasing Pressure for Penetration': Gender, Pathology, and Emotion in George Kennan's Formation of the Cold War," *Journal of American History* 83 (March 1997): 1309–39; Robert D. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (Amherst, MA, 2001).

42. David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (New York, 1972). See also Garry Wills, *The Kennedy Imprisonment: A Meditation on Power* (Boston, 1982); Thomas G. Paterson, "Introduction: John F. Kennedy's Quest for Victory and Global Crisis," in *Kennedy's Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961–1963*, ed. Thomas G. Paterson (New York, 1989), 14–15; and Thomas C. Reeves, *A Question of Character: A Life of John F. Kennedy* (New York, 1991).

43. Halberstam, *Best and the Brightest*, 528–33; Doris Kearns, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream* (New York, 1976); Michael H. Hunt, *Lyndon Johnson's War: America's Cold War Crusade in Vietnam, 1945–1968* (New York, 1996), 75–76, 85; Fredrik Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam* (Berkeley, CA, 1999), 393.

misogyny, scatological humor, sexual predations, and insecurities about being weak and insufficiently masculine of both Kennedy and Johnson have always been well known and have been well documented. Johnson's disdain for the "weak" and "soft" Ambassador to the United Nations Adlai Stevenson—"He squats when he pees," LBJ once said derisively—epitomizes this cult of masculinity.[44] Similarly, historians were well aware of the foreign-policy implications of Theodore Roosevelt's preoccupation with the "strenuous life" of robust masculinity long before the appearance of Kristin Hoganson's remarkable 1998 book about America's imperial wars against Spain and in the Philippines.[45]

What is new, then, is not the actual use of "gender" (or other rubrics, such as culture or race), but the explicit categorization of the taxonomy of gender. In other words, gender has not been recently introduced, but recently formalized and theorized. This brief discussion is not meant to detract from the striking originality, ingenuity, and ultimately persuasive causal force of the new cultural diplomatic history. What it is meant to demonstrate is the enormous potential for religion within the new cultural diplomatic history. Thus while historians have long recognized that American men in the 1890s and 1940s harbored deep insecurities about their own masculinity, and about the increasingly assertive role of women in public life, none could appreciate the depth of the policy, political, and cultural implications until Hoganson (the Spanish-American War) and Costigliola (the early Cold War) had published their work. In order to be professionally and intellectually successful, then, historians using religion must emulate their counterparts who have already used gender, race, and culture.

In a situation that resembles the disorganized and unmethodical use of gender before Rosenberg, Costigliola, Dean, Hoganson, and others provided formal systematization and methodological rigor, diplomatic and religious historians have used religion to explain the history of American foreign relations sporadically, haphazardly, and largely in isolation from one another. The result is a wide but formless literature that does not cohere very well into an overarching theory, methodology, or school. These many but isolated specific instances have what Jon Butler, a historian of early America who specializes in religion, has termed the jack-in-the-box effect. "Religion pops up colorfully on occasion," Butler notes in a recent discussion of the paucity of religion in historical surveys of modern America. "But as with a child's jack-in-the-box, the surprise offered by the color or peculiarity of the figure is seldom followed by an extended performance, much less substance." (Interestingly, and tellingly, while Butler lists the overlooked importance of religion to modern American politics and elections, and to the process of economic, technological, and intellectual

44. Quoted in Richard Goodwin, *Remembering America: A Voice from the Sixties* (Boston, 1988), 294.

45. Kristin Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven, CT, 1998). See also Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago, 1995), 170–215.

change, he fails to note its neglect in the study of foreign relations.)[46] Rather than having a substantive impact on the study of American foreign relations, religion and religious topics have had an occasional, limited, and even ephemeral influence.

To be sure, thematic overviews of the religious influence on American diplomacy do exist—though they usually tend to be short essays designed to influence contemporary foreign-policy debates rather than analyze the past. In this vein, political scientist James Kurth argues that one cannot understand the unfolding of America's relationship with the world without also recognizing the guiding, if weakening, hand of American Protestantism.[47] Computer scientist David Gelernter agrees that American Protestantism is central to American foreign policy, and has been since the colonial era, but concludes that America has not at all lost its Judeo-Christian religious guidance.[48] With their polemical stridency and advocacy, Kurth and Gelernter help illustrate why academic historians of American foreign relations overlook religion: it is often a subject that eschews neutrality and objectivity and thus requires one to take a partisan position. On a more scholarly level, religious sociologist William Marin contends that to be successful, American diplomats must take into account both the religious views of foreign nations and their own nation's long religious tradition, and that a purely secular foreign policy is as unattainable as it is undesirable.[49] Paul T. McCartney, a political scientist, argues that religion is central to the formation of an American universalistic identity that has shaped Americans' approach to the world since the Revolution.[50] Only Leo Ribuffo, a historian who emphasizes the complexity and diversity of America's religious heritage and the correspondingly complex, and diffuse, influence it has had on American foreign policy, has offered a historical, scholarly treatment of the subject.[51]

The role of religion most often receives detailed scrutiny in overviews of American nationalism, ideology, and sense of mission, which all have obvious applicability to foreign relations. Whether or not they agree that it actually exists, historians of American identity and thought have argued that exceptionalism has religious roots, specifically in the founding of colonial, Puritan New

46. Butler, "Jack-in-the-Box Faith," 1359–60.

47. James Kurth, "The Protestant Deformation and American Foreign Policy," *Orbis* 42 (Spring 1998): 221, 235–39.

48. David Gelernter, "Americanism—And Its Enemies," *Commentary* 119 (January 2005): 41–48.

49. William Martin, "With God on Their Side: Religion and U.S. Foreign Policy," in Heclo and McClay, eds., *Religion Returns to the Public Square*, 327–59.

50. McCartney, "American Nationalism and U.S. Foreign Policy," 400–407.

51. Leo P. Ribuffo, "Religion and American Foreign Policy: The Story of a Complex Relationship," *National Interest* 52 (Spring 1998): 36–51; Leo P. Ribuffo, "Religion in the History of U.S. Foreign Policy," in *The Influence of Faith: Religious Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Elliot Abrams (Lanham, MD, 2001), 1–27; Leo P. Ribuffo, "Religion," in *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy*, eds. Alexander DeConde, Richard Dean Burns, and Fredrik Logevall (New York, 2002), 371–91.

England.[52] And while generally presumed to be culpable in the creation of exceptionalism, historians have also found the Puritans' theological imprint on the extended origins of everything from the American Revolution to the Vietnam War.[53] In his overview of American expansionism, Anders Stephanson stresses that the Puritan legacy of providence, sacred errand, and millennial progress, from seventeenth-century Massachusetts Bay through to the eighteenth-century theologian Jonathan Edwards and eventually to the nineteenth-century concept of Manifest Destiny, did more than anything else to motivate American expansion across the North American continent and, after 1898, across the globe. The Puritans, Stephanson argues, believed themselves to be on a divinely sanctioned, millennial errand from God to settle the New World, build a new Jerusalem, and expand their holy dominion. It is this belief, that Americans are God's chosen people—Calvinist rather than strictly Puritan—that permeates the history of U.S. foreign policy.[54] Conversely, in his

---

52. See, for example, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "America: Experiment or Destiny," *American Historical Review* 82 (June 1977): 514–17; Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (New York, 1996), 18–20, 60–67, 91–93, 154–57; Daniel T. Rodgers, "Exceptionalism," in *Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past*, eds. Anthony Molho and Gordon S. Wood (Princeton, NJ, 1998), 23–24, 27; Anatol Lieven, *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism* (New York, 2004), 33–34; and, from a contemporary rather than a historical perspective, Micklethwait and Wooldridge, *Right Nation*, 310–12. While Schlesinger and Lipset attempt to illustrate that the United States is indeed exceptional—that is, different—Rodgers argues that exceptionalism is a constructed identity, created deliberately by colonial elites, such as the Puritan leader John Winthrop, and recreated unwittingly by postwar Americanists, such as the Puritan historian Perry Miller. Like Rodgers, Lieven believes American exceptionalism to be largely mythical. For recent comparisons to Europe, see Robert E. Alvis, *Religion and the Rise of Nationalism: A Profile of an East-Central European City* (Syracuse, NY, 2005); and Michael Burleigh, *Earthly Powers: Religion and Politics in Europe from the French Revolution to the Great War* (London, 2005). For an excellent comparative analysis, see Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (Oxford, 2003).

53. For the Revolution, see Edmund S. Morgan, "The Puritan Ethic and the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 24 (January 1967): 3–43; and Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison, WI, 1978), 120–34, 141–61, 170–73. For Vietnam, see Loren Baritz, *Backfire: A History of How American Culture Led Us into Vietnam and Made Us Fight the Way We Did* (New York, 1985), 25–34. See also, more generally, David L. Larson, ed., *The Puritan Ethic in United States Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ, 1966). For a critique of anachronistically presentist concerns of works on the Puritans, see Janice Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge, MA, 1994), 1–2, 215–16 n3.

54. Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny*, esp. 3–15. See also Conrad Cherry, ed., *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1971); and Johan Galtung, "U.S. Foreign Policy as Manifest Theology," in *Culture and International Relations*, ed. Jongsuk Chay (New York, 1990), 119–40. The Puritans' pungent and, some would say, extremist rhetoric, expressed in thousands of carefully written and well-preserved sermons, has made them an easily accessible subject for historians of American nationalism, thought, and identity. For the most important, foundational works on Puritan radicalism and ideology, see Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, MA, 1956); Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* (Cambridge, MA, 1965), which examines English Puritanism before and after its migration to Massachusetts Bay; and Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*. See also Peter N. Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness: The Intellectual Significance of the New England Frontier, 1629–1700* (New York, 1969); and Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge, England, 1992).

provocative survey of American foreign relations since the Revolution, Walter A. McDougall argues for the importance of religion in framing how Americans, from the Puritan leader John Winthrop to George Washington, originally perceived their global role as one of leading by example rather than involvement.[55] Those diplomatic historians who address the Puritans usually perfunctorily concur with Stephanson's version and habitually invoke Winthrop, the first governor of Massachusetts and the author of the famous "city on a hill" speech, as the founder of American exceptionalism and messianism and, by extension, interventionism and imperialism.[56]

While overarching theories that look beyond the Puritan ethic are sorely lacking and comprehensive surveys are noticeably absent, specific episodes and individuals in American diplomatic history, along the lines of Butler's jack-in-the-box metaphor, have had their religious aspects seriously and systematically examined. Reflecting its prevalence in the everyday life of the colonies, religion remains paramount to the study of colonial America. It is in this period that the religious influence on the American worldview began.[57] The establishment of the very first "American" military units in seventeenth-century Massachusetts, for example, had as much to do with notions of Christian piety, politics, and order as it did with fear of Indians and European desires to expand territorially.[58]

---

55. Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World since 1776* (Boston, 1997), 15–38. Stephanson, it should be noted, also acknowledges the exemplary, isolationist spirit of Puritanism, but argues that it was not the movement's dominant strain.

56. See, for example, Richard W. Van Alstyne, *The Rising American Empire* (New York, 1960), 10; Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, 1750 to the Present*, 2d ed. (New York, 1994), 9, 582, 745; H. W. Brands, *What America Owes the World: The Struggle for the Soul of Foreign Policy* (New York, 1998), vii, ix, 1; Thomas G. Paterson and Dennis Merrill, eds., *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations: To 1920*, 6th ed. (Boston, 2005); and Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War* (New York, 2005), 122. Many religious historians, however, do not agree and instead argue that the Puritans were not embarking on an expansionist mission by seeking a deliberate break with the Old World. For the most authoritative accounts, see David Cressy, *Coming Over: Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, England, 1987); Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1988); and Stephen Foster, *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture, 1570–1700* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1991). For the historiography of Puritan studies, see David D. Hall, "On Common Ground: The Coherence of American Puritan Studies," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 44 (April 1987): 193–229; and Charles L. Cohen, "The Post-Puritan Paradigm of Early American Religious History," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 54 (October 1997): 695–722.

57. On the centrality of religion to colonial and early American history, see Jon Butler, "Religion in Early America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 54 (October 1997): 693.

58. T. H. Breen, "English Origins and New World Development: The Case of the Covenanted Militia in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts," *Past and Present* 57 (November 1972): 74–96; Marie L. Ahearn, *The Rhetoric of War: Training Day, the Militia, and the Military Sermon* (Westport, CT, 1989); James Biser Whisker, *The American Colonial Militia*, vol. II, *The New England Militia, 1606–1785* (Lewiston, NY, 1997), 29–34. But for a complicating thesis, see Louise A. Breen, *Transgressing the Bounds: Subversive Enterprises among the Puritan Elite in Massachusetts, 1630–1692* (New York, 2001), especially 3–5, 100.

This is as true for colonial wars as it is for other topics in colonial American history. Thus, the colonists' major conflicts with various Indian nations have been examined in at least a partly religious light. In addition to Alfred A. Cave's singular monograph, the Puritans' experience in the ethno-religious Pequot War of 1636–1638 has provoked controversy over whether the colonists' destruction of their Indian enemies constituted faith-based genocide.[59] Jill Lepore has brilliantly probed the causes, course, and consequences of another Puritan-Indian conflict, King Philip's War of 1675–1676, to trace the roots of American identity. The war was, proportionately, one of the deadliest in American history, and, in its bloody wake, the victorious but disillusioned colonists fashioned themselves an exceptionalist identity, in contrast to the savage Spanish Catholics and even more savage Indian heathens, that served to justify the war. "Later on," Lepore writes, "after nearly a century of repetition on successive American frontiers, this triangulated conception of identity would form the basis of American nationalism" in succeeding centuries, a Calvinistic concept of nationality that is still religiously infused today much as it was during its seventeenth-century formation.[60] Religion also played an important role in the outbreak of other colonial wars, such as King William's War (1689–1697, known also by its European name, the War of the League of Augsburg), Queen Anne's War (1702–1713, known also as the War of Spanish Succession), and King George's War (1744–1748).[61]

The colonists' foreign relations, necessarily defined and determined to a great extent by England (Great Britain after 1707), also often erupted in war. While English and British conflict with the Spanish and Dutch would rage, intermittently and briefly, throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, it was the French who would pose the gravest danger and, not coinci-

---

59. Alfred A. Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst, MA, 1996). Arguing that it was not genocide is Steven T. Katz, "The Pequot War Reconsidered," *New England Quarterly* 64 (June 1991): 206–24; and Steven T. Katz, "Pequots and the Question of Genocide: A Reply to Michael Freeman," *New England Quarterly* 68 (December 1995): 641–49. Arguing that it was is Michael Freeman, "Puritans and Pequots: The Question of Genocide," *New England Quarterly* 68 (June 1995): 278–93. On the Pequot War, see also Alden T. Vaughan, "Pequots and Puritans: The Causes of the War of 1637," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 21 (April 1964): 256–69; Adam J. Hirsch, "The Collision of Military Cultures in Seventeenth-Century New England," *Journal of American History* 74 (March 1988): 1189, 1196–1212; and Ronald Dale Karr, "'Why Should You Be So Furious?': The Violence of the Pequot War," *Journal of American History* 85 (December 1998): 876–909.

60. Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York, 1998), xiv. On King Philip's War, see also Russell Bourne, *The Red King's Rebellion: Racial Politics in New England, 1675–1678* (New York, 1990); Michael J. Puglisi, *Puritans Besieged: The Legacies of King Philip's War in the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (Lanham, MD, 1991); and James Drake, "Restraining Atrocity: The Conduct of King Philip's War," *New England Quarterly* 70 (March 1997): 33–56.

61. Richard I. Melvoin, *New England Outpost: War and Society in Colonial Deerfield* (New York, 1989); Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York, 2002), 78–80; Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, *Captors and Captives: The 1704 French and Indian Raid on Deerfield* (Amherst, MA, 2003).

dentally, later contribute most to the formation of an independent American polity. The Seven Years' War marked the zenith of the campaign against the French; its outcome saw France all but wiped out as a colonial power in North America. The fighting in North America was but one theater in what could be called, in the strictest sense, the first world war. Although the disillusioned aftermath of the war would provide the spark for the revolutionary movement a decade later, the American colonists were initially delighted at the defeat of the French. Anti-Catholicism combined with Protestant providentialism and exceptionalism to provide the Anglo-American cause with a good deal of religious support and motivation. Indeed, as Fred Anderson notes in his magisterial history of the conflict, *Crucible of War*, "when the smoke finally cleared, sermons had probably outnumbered bonfires" in victorious New England. It is a thesis that Anderson first argued in *A People's Army*, his history of how the war unfolded in and affected Massachusetts.[62] The dual effect of colonial religion on the Seven Years' War—providing both positive (for Protestantism) and negative (against Catholicism) motivation—is also a central thesis of Alan Heimert's landmark work of religious history, *Religion and the American Mind*.[63] Nonetheless, like the religious aspect of almost every other episode in American diplomatic and military history, there is much room for future research: Anderson touches on religion only briefly, while Heimert examines it exclusively without really considering the diplomatic and military contexts.

The Seven Years' War, of course, unleashed the forces that would culminate in the American Revolution. By waging war against the British and allying themselves formally with the French and Spanish, the revolutionaries committed the first acts of U.S. foreign policy (even if the actual American state did not come into being until 1783). The Revolution was simultaneously a revolutionary war, a civil war, an international war, and an anticolonial war, and for these reasons it remains central to understanding the American worldview and diplomatic tradition. While diplomatic historians recognize this, usually in passing, they have not examined the era in any great depth. Religious historians, on the other hand, have fought tremendously productive historiographical battles over the origins of the American Revolution. The Great Awakening of the 1740s—the first of several widespread religious revivals to engulf and transform America—marked the rise of individual, personal piety and the concomitant erosion of the authority of the established churches. This process, fifty years before the actual outbreak of revolution, was crucial to the very concept of independence. Frank Lambert, for example, notes that George Whitefield, one of the revival's central figures, chronologically and conceptually "provides a

62. Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766* (New York, 2000), 374; Fred Anderson, *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1984), 155–57.

63. Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge, MA, 1966), 324–39, 345–47.

direct link between the Great Awakening and the American Revolution."[64] Building upon these religious foundations, several religious historians have argued that the Patriot movement for independence itself was religiously infused and ecclesiastically driven, excepting, of course, the naturally loyalist Anglican Church.[65] Mark Noll, perhaps the most prominent and prolific exponent of this view, argues that "American Christians were present, involved, and even in the forefront of promoting an independent United States of America."[66] Moreover, the Patriot movement was not simply carried along by messianic Protestantism. As Lambert has recently shown elsewhere, the Patriots were agitating at least as much for religious freedom as they were for political liberty. "Americans," he writes, "also sought a revolution in religion."[67] While some religious historians, most notably Jon Butler, argue that the religious influence has been exaggerated, the general consensus is that religion and politics enjoyed a symbiotic relationship that was crucial to the Revolution's formation and success.[68]

The relationship between religion and American war and diplomacy did not end in 1783. If anything, it deepened irrevocably in the following decades and

---

64. Frank Lambert, *"Pedlar in Divinity": George Whitefield and the Transatlantic Revivals* (Princeton, NJ, 1994), 198. See also Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind*, 27–158; Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America: An Historical Account of the Development of American Religious Life*, 2d ed. (New York, 1973), 67–82; Donald Weber, *Rhetoric and History in Revolutionary New England* (New York, 1988); and Noll, *America's God*, 53–157. However, Joseph A. Conforti, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Tradition, and American Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1995) cautions against drawing too direct a causal line between the Great Awakening and the American Revolution.

65. Carl Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics, 1689–1775* (New York, 1962), 171–340; Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind*, 294–532; Harry S. Stout, "Religion, Communication, and the Ideological Origins of the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 34 (October 1977): 519–41; Hatch, *Sacred Cause of Liberty*; Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT, 1989), 5–9; Stephen A. Marini, *Radical Sects of Revolutionary New England* (Cambridge, MA, 1982); Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740–1790* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1982), 243–85, 312–17; Charles W. Akers, *The Divine Politician: Samuel Cooper and the American Revolution in Boston* (Boston, 1982); Ruth H. Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756–1800* (Cambridge, England, 1985), xii–xiv, 53–93; Ruth H. Bloch, "Religion and Ideological Change in the American Revolution," in *Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980s*, ed. Mark A. Noll (New York, 1990), 44–61. Melvin B. Endy, Jr., "Just War, Holy War, and Millennialism in Revolutionary America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 42 (January 1985): 3–25, argues that while the colonial clergy's influence was decisive, their message was essentially political rather than religious.

66. Mark A. Noll, *One Nation under God? Christian Faith and Political Action in America* (New York, 1988), 35. See also Mark A. Noll, *Christians in the American Revolution* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1977); Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1992), 115–22; and Mark A. Noll, "The American Revolution and Protestant Evangelicalism," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23 (Winter 1993): 615–38.

67. Frank Lambert, *The Founding Fathers and the Place of Religion in America* (Princeton, NJ, 2003), 207.

68. Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA, 1990), 194–224.

went on to influence virtually all of America's foreign conflicts. Although most diplomatic historians generally overlook it, the era of the early republic is essential to the study of American foreign relations.[69] The Second Great Awakening, which convulsed and utterly transformed the American religious landscape in the early nineteenth century, did much also to shape early American foreign relations. Fusing antiformalist styles of faith that relied on emotion and devotion, rather than detailed theological debates or close readings of scripture, with already powerful notions of nationalism and expansionism, religion following the Second Great Awakening played a major part in bringing about the War of 1812, Manifest Destiny, and the Mexican-American War. Religion also played an integral role in shaping the antiwar movements that emerged in reaction to each of these campaigns.[70]

If any topic in the history of American foreign relations has had its religious aspects examined thoroughly, it is the role played by Christian missionaries in the turn to formal imperialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Participating particularly heavily in East and Southeast Asia, American missionaries sought to bring not only the religious "blessings" of Christian civilization to the benighted Orient, they also facilitated the imposition of U.S. economic, political, strategic, and cultural imperialism. Indeed, because American missionaries in China were on the ground interacting with the Chinese people and Western agents alike, they have received the kind of sustained academic scrutiny, from both diplomatic and religious historians, normally

---

69. On the neglect and misunderstanding of this period, see Jonathan Dull, "American Foreign Relations before the Constitution: A Historiographical Wasteland," in Haines and Walker, eds., *American Foreign Relations*, 3–15; Ronald L. Hatzenbuehler, "The Early National Period, 1789–1815: The Need for Redefinition," ibid., 17–32; Emily S. Rosenberg, "A Call to Revolution: A Roundtable on Early U.S. Foreign Relations," *Diplomatic History* 22 (Winter 1998): 63–64; Bradford Perkins, "Early American Foreign Relations: Opportunities and Challenges," ibid., 115–20; and William Earl Weeks, "New Directions in the Study of Early American Foreign Relations," in Hogan, ed., *Paths to Power*, 8–10.

70. On religion and the War of 1812, see William Gribbin, *The Churches Militant: The War of 1812 and American Religion* (New Haven, CT, 1973); Ralph Beebe, "The War of 1812," in *The Wars of America: Christian Views*, ed. Ronald A. Wells (Grand Rapids, MI, 1981), 25–43; and Michael A. Bellesiles, "Experiencing the War of 1812," in *Britain and America Go to War: The Impact of War and Warfare in Anglo-America, 1754–1815*, ed. Julie Flavell and Stephen Conway (Gainesville, FL, 2004), 207, 218–19. On religion and Manifest Destiny, see Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation*, 122–36; Ahlstrom, *Religious History of the American People*, 845; Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, MA, 1983), 169, 288–89; Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny*; and Robert W. Johannsen, "Young America and the War with Mexico," in *Dueling Eagles: Reinterpreting the U.S.-Mexican War, 1846–1848*, eds. Richard V. Francaviglia and Douglas W. Richmond (Fort Worth, TX, 2000), 155–59. On religion and the Mexican-American War, see Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800–1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nationalism* (New York, 1938), 238–39; Ronald A. Wells, "The War with Mexico," in Wells, ed., *Wars of America*, 45–65; Robert W. Johannsen, *To the Halls of the Montezumas: The Mexican War in the American Imagination* (New York, 1985), 49–50; and James M. McCaffrey, *Army of Manifest Destiny: The American Soldier in the Mexican War, 1846–1848* (New York, 1992), 71–73, 147–49, 152–57.

reserved for diplomats, politicians, intellectuals, industrialists, and theologians.[71] However, although both religious and diplomatic historians have delved thoroughly into the missionaries' role, diplomatic historians have not been as attentive to the wider religious context that was shaping not only America's domestic politics and society, but also its foreign relations. Other influences, notably race and Anglo-Saxonism but also gender, have received their due while religious subjects other than missionaries have not.[72]

---

71. On American missionaries and their dual political/religious proselytism, see William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago, 1987). On Catholic missionaries, see Angelyn Dries, *The Missionary Movement in American Catholic History* (Maryknoll, NY, 1998). On the missionaries' role in Asia, especially China, during the era of formal overseas U.S. imperialism, see Paul A. Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats: The American Protestant Missionary Movement in China, 1890–1952* (Princeton, NJ, 1958); Kenneth M. Mackenzie, *The Robe and the Sword: The Methodist Church and the Rise of American Imperialism* (Washington, DC, 1961); Marilyn Blatt Young, *The Rhetoric of Empire: American China Policy, 1895–1901* (Cambridge, MA, 1968), 76–87, 142–43, 187–97, 213–14; Robert F. McClellan, "Missionary Influence on American Attitudes toward China at the Turn of This Century," *Church History* 38 (December 1969): 475–85; Jerry Israel, "'For God, for China and for Yale'—The Open Door in Action," *American Historical Review* 75 (February 1970): 796–807; Joseph L. Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary Influence on American Policy, 1810–1927* (Minneapolis, 1971); Sidney A. Forsythe, *An American Missionary Community in China, 1895–1905* (Cambridge, MA, 1971); John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America* (Cambridge, MA, 1974); Valentin H. Rabe, *The Home Base of American China Missions, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, MA, 1978); Thomas A. Breslin, *China, American Catholicism, and the Missionary* (University Park, PA, 1980); Michael H. Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China to 1914* (New York, 1983), 154–68, 285–98; James Reed, *The Missionary Mind and American East Asia Policy, 1911–1915* (Cambridge, MA, 1983); Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* (New Haven, CT, 1984); Patricia R. Hill, *The World Their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870–1920* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1985); Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines, 1898–1916: An Inquiry into the American Colonial Mentality* (Urbana, IL, 1986); F. Calvin Parker, *The Southern Baptist Mission in Japan, 1889–1989* (Lanham, MD, 1991); Gael Graham, *Gender, Culture, and Christianity: American Protestant Mission Schools in China, 1880–1930* (New York, 1995); and Carol C. Chin, "Beneficent Imperialists: American Women Missionaries in China at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Diplomatic History* 27 (June 2003): 327–52. For an earlier era, see Suzanne Wilson Barnett and John King Fairbank, eds., *Christianity in China: Early Protestant Missionary Writings* (Cambridge, MA, 1985); Hunt, *Making of a Special Relationship*, 25–32; and Paul W. Harris, "Cultural Imperialism and American Protestant Missionaries: Collaboration and Dependency in Mid-Nineteenth Century China," *Pacific Historical Review* 60 (August 1991): 309–38. For a later era, see Erleen J. Christensen, *In War and Famine: Missionaries in China's Honan Province in the 1940s* (Montreal and Kingston, Canada, 2005). For the historiography of this later period, see Dana L. Robert, "From Missions to Mission to Beyond Missions: The Historiography of American Protestant Foreign Missions since World War II," in Stout and Hart, eds., *New Directions in American Religious History*, 362–93.

72. An exception from religious history is Forrest G. Wood, *The Arrogance of Faith: Christianity and Race in America from the Colonial Era to the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1990), 206–37. For the role of race and Anglo-Saxonism in U.S. expansion before the era of imperialism, see Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*. For race and overseas expansion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Stuart Anderson, *Race and Rapprochement: Anglo-Saxonism and Anglo-American Relations, 1895–1904* (Rutherford, NJ, 1981); Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 64–90; Walter LaFeber, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*, vol. 2, *The American Search for Opportunity, 1865–1913* (Cambridge, England, 1993), 45–59; and Paul A. Kramer, "Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British

While the two world wars have provided fertile ground for religious historians,[73] and for diplomatic historians concerned with the politics, strategy, diplomacy, and economics of the wars and the interwar period of "isolationism," the religious influence on U.S. foreign relations from 1914 to 1945 has been noticeably absent in the existing literature. The two most notable exceptions—the religious strain of the isolationists in the 1930s, and religious reactions to the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan in 1945—are usually treated in isolation.[74] As a predominantly political, ideological, and thus conceptual struggle, the same certainly cannot be said of the Cold War. Indeed, the centrality of the intangible, imaginative aspects that propelled the Cold War—credibility, deterrence, propaganda, domino theories, psychological warfare, and the competing ideological constructs of communism and capitalism—quickly facilitated the rise of international relations (IR) theory, a highly conceptual discipline, as a separate branch of intellectual and academic inquiry. In this sense, it is virtually inconceivable that IR theory and its historical offspring, such as the preoccupation with realism, credibility, and national security, would have attained such academic predominance without the Cold War. Many diplomatic historians, in turn, have viewed the Cold War as predominantly a struggle over concepts and ideas.

Given this general political, academic, and intellectual milieu, it is perhaps natural that the religious aspects of the Cold War have been explored broadly and deeply.[75] Along with the imperial role of Christian missionaries, episodes from the Cold War provide the specific exceptions that prove the general rule about diplomatic historians' agnosticism. Examples from the Cold War abound. British diplomats skillfully played on Truman's religious predilections to draw

---

and United States Empires, 1880–1910," *Journal of American History* 88 (March 2002): 1320–37. However, for two important works that warn against the exaggeration of the racial influence, see Frank Ninkovich, *The United States and Imperialism* (Oxford, 2001), 44–45; and Eric T. L. Love, *Race over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865–1900* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004). For the role of gender, see Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization* and Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*.

73. See, especially, Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion*, vol. 3, *Under God, Indivisible, 1941–1960* (Chicago, 1996), 15–112 and Gerald L. Sittser, *A Cautious Patriotism: The American Churches and the Second World War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1997).

74. On the religious elements of isolationism, see Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York, 1982); Leo P. Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Philadelphia, 1983); and Glen Jeansonne, *Gerald K. Smith: Minister of Hate* (New Haven, CT, 1988). On reactions to the atomic bomb, see especially Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), 115–22; and Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*, 2d ed. (Chapel Hill, NC, 1994), 196–229.

75. For a multinational introduction, see Dianne Kirby, ed., *Religion and the Cold War* (New York, 2003). On the role of American religious groups, see Alfred A. Hero, Jr., *American Religious Groups View Foreign Policy: Trends in Rank-and-File Opinion, 1937–1969* (Durham, NC, 1973).

the United States deeper into a commitment to Western Europe.[76] Towering religious leaders breached the boundaries between theology and politics to promote their own solutions to the Cold War stalemate; Reinhold Niebuhr's Christian realism and Billy Graham's crusading anticommunism are probably the two most prominent examples.[77] Andrew Rotter illustrates how American policymakers' perceptions of Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism affected their policy toward South Asia in the early and middle Cold War eras.[78] The creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the enduring strength of the Jewish presence in America has also had a profound, if contentiously debated, effect on American foreign policy.[79] U.S. intervention in Vietnam has also had its religious aspects covered extensively. Springing inexorably from the equally pious and anti-Communist 1950s, American religion, as Seth Jacobs has recently illustrated, was a key element in the selection and support of the Catholic Ngo Dinh Diem as leader of South Vietnam.[80] Conversely, a decade later the war unleashed civil trauma, not least of which was the largest antiwar movement in American history. Central to the antiwar movement's stance was a widespread perception that the war was immoral and unjust, and central to this perception was the

---

76. Dianne Kirby, "Divinely Sanctioned: The Anglo-American Cold War Alliance and the Defence of Western Civilization and Christianity, 1945–48," *Journal of Contemporary History* 35 (July 2000): 385–412.

77. On Niebuhr, see especially Roger L. Shinn, "Realism, Radicalism, and Eschatology in Reinhold Niebuhr: A Reassessment," *Journal of Religion* 54 (October 1974): 409–23; Richard Wightman Fox, *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Biography*, rev. ed. (Ithaca, NY, 1996); Langdon Gilkey, *On Niebuhr: A Theological Study* (Chicago, 2001); and Campbell Craig, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan: Total War in the Realism of Niebuhr, Morgenthau, and Waltz* (New York, 2003). On Graham, see especially Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 2d ed. (Baltimore, 1996), 77–82; and Roger Bruns, *Billy Graham: A Biography* (Westport, CT, 2004).

78. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds*, 220–48.

79. Edward Tivnan, *Lobby: Jewish Political Power and American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1987); David Howard Goldberg, *Foreign Policy and Ethnic Interest Groups: American and Canadian Jews Lobby for Israel* (New York, 1990); Alexander DeConde, *Ethnicity, Race, and American Foreign Policy: A History* (Boston, 1992), 134–40, 165–72; Judith A. Klinghoffer, *Vietnam, Jews, and the Middle East: Unintended Consequences* (New York, 1999); Tony Smith, *Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), 52–59, 67–68, 107–22, 153–54, 158–61; Paul Charles Merkley, *American Presidents, Religion, and Israel: The Heirs of Cyrus* (Westport, CT, 2004); Zvi Ganin, *An Uneasy Relationship: American Jewish Leadership and Israel, 1948–1957* (Syracuse, NY, 2005). See also the recent controversial essay by political scientists John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, and the fierce reactions to it. For the full version of the essay, see "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy," Kennedy School of Government Faculty Working Paper (March 2006), http://ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/Research/wpaper.nsf/rwp/RWP06-011/$File/rwp_06_011_walt.pdf (April 27, 2006); for an abridged version, see "The Israel Lobby," *London Review of Books*, March 23, 2006, 3, 5–12. For critics of the essay, see, for example, Michael B. Oren, "Quiet Riot," *New Republic*, April 10, 2006, 9–10; and Christopher Hitchens, "Overstating Jewish Power," *Slate*, March 27, 2006, http://www.slate.com/id/2138741 (March 29, 2006). For critics of the critical reaction—who cannot exactly be called supporters of the essay's main arguments—see, for example, Tony Judt, "A Lobby, Not a Conspiracy," *New York Times*, April 19, 2006, A21; and Richard Cohen, "No, It's Not Anti-Semitic," *Washington Post*, April 25, 2006, A23.

80. Jacobs, *America's Miracle Man in Vietnam*. See also Wilson D. Miscamble, "Francis Cardinal Spellman and 'Spellman's War,'" in *The Human Tradition in the Vietnam Era*, ed. David L. Anderson (Wilmington, DE, 2000), 3–22.

activism of many of the nation's religious leaders, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., William Sloane Coffin, Jr., and the radical Jesuit priests Philip and Daniel Berrigan.[81] Nonetheless, outside the Truman, Eisenhower, and Vietnam War eras, there remains an enormous amount of research and analysis to do to link American religion with U.S. foreign policy.

As a genre, biography has also been a fruitful source for religious attitudes and influences on foreign policy, although those whose religious beliefs are examined are usually obvious candidates for such examination because of their famous faith. Due to his father's occupation as a minister and his own avowed Presbyterianism, Woodrow Wilson has been perhaps the easiest target. His idealism is seen mainly as a product of his religious views. However, while some biographers treat Wilson's faith as the primary influence on his approach to foreign policy, others, such as John A. Thompson, conclude that Wilson was essentially politically pragmatic and that religion was Wilson's vague guide to general behavior rather than a blueprint for specific action.[82] Other religious icons of U.S. diplomatic history are equally obvious targets. Although Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. famously referred to John Foster Dulles as "the high priest of the Cold War," academic historians have been divided, just as they were with Wilson, over just how much Dulles's faith guided his foreign policy.[83] Jimmy

---

81. Michael P. Hamilton, ed., *The Vietnam War: Christian Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1967); Edwin S. Gaustad, *Dissent in American Religion* (Chicago, 1973), 144–45; Mitchell K. Hall, *Because of Their Faith: CALCAV and Religious Opposition to the Vietnam War* (New York, 1990); David W. Levy, *The Debate over Vietnam* (Baltimore, 1995), 91–102; James Carroll, *An American Requiem: God, My Father, and the War that Came between Us* (New York, 1996); Scott Flipse, "To Save 'Free Vietnam' and Lose Our Souls: The Missionary Impulse, Voluntary Agencies, and Protestant Dissent against the War, 1965–71," in *The Foreign Missionary Enterprise at Home: Explorations in North American History*, eds. Daniel H. Bays and Grant Wacker (Tuscaloosa, AL, 2003), 206–22. On King's opposition to the war, see David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York, 1986); and Simon Hall, *Peace and Freedom: The Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements of the 1960s* (Philadelphia, 2005). On Coffin's, see Warren Goldstein, *William Sloane Coffin, Jr.: A Holy Impatience* (New Haven, CT, 2004). On the Berrigans', see Murray Polner and Jim O'Grady, *Disarmed and Dangerous: The Radical Lives and Times of Daniel and Philip Berrigan* (New York, 1997).

82. John A. Thompson, *Woodrow Wilson* (London, 2002), 18–20, 249–50; John A. Thompson, "More Tactics Than Strategy: Woodrow Wilson and World War I, 1914–1919," in *Artists of Power: Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Their Enduring Impact on U.S. Foreign Policy*, eds. William N. Tilchin and Charles E. Neu (Westport, CT, 2006), 95–115. See also John Milton Cooper, Jr., *The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge, MA, 1983), 19, 123–24, 171; and Frank Ninkovich, *Modernity and Power: A History of the Domino Theory in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago, 1994), 44–68. For works that emphasize the predominance of Wilson's religious influence, see John Morton Blum, *Woodrow Wilson and the Politics of Morality* (Boston, 1956), 7–9; Arthur S. Link, *Wilson the Diplomatist: A Look at His Major Foreign Policies* (Baltimore, 1957), 12–17; Arthur Walworth, *Woodrow Wilson*, 2d ed. (Boston, 1965); John M. Mulder, *Woodrow Wilson: The Years of Preparation* (Princeton, NJ, 1978); and, more generally, Richard M. Gamble, *The War for Righteousness: Progressive Christianity, the Great War, and the Rise of the Messianic Nation* (Wilmington, DE, 2003).

83. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Cycles of American History* (Boston, 1986), 394. For historians who concur with Schlesinger, albeit from very different perspectives, see Inboden, "Soul of American Diplomacy," 329–73; and Jacobs, *America's Miracle Man in Vietnam*. For those who do not, see Michael A. Guhin, *John Foster Dulles: A Statesman and His Times* (New

Carter, an evangelical Southern Baptist, based his foreign policy on the promotion of human rights, a stance that, according to his national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, "reflected Carter's own religious beliefs."[84] Ronald Reagan, who proclaimed a devout if amorphous Protestant faith, was even more explicit about religion acting as his guide on foreign policy. Old Testament certainties about good and evil informed his view of the Soviet Union as an "evil empire," while the apocalyptic visions in the Book of Revelation had a profound effect on Reagan and provided the source for his efforts to limit nuclear weapons and reduce the threat of nuclear war.[85] And of course, few doubt the importance of religion to the worldview of George W. Bush.[86] Although further research into the religious views of these obvious figures is important, we need to know much more about how religion affected the foreign policies of other major figures of the twentieth century, such as John Hay, Herbert Hoover, Henry Stimson, Franklin Roosevelt, Cordell Hull, Dean Acheson, George Kennan, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, George H. W. Bush, and Bill Clinton.

In the end, however, a rubric or theory or methodology that is used to examine history must be able to answer the ultimate historical question: "So

---

York, 1972); Ronald W. Pruessen, *John Foster Dulles: The Road to Power* (New York, 1982); and Richard H. Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Wilmington, DE, 1999).

84. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Advisor, 1977–1981* (New York, 1983), 49. See also James T. Baker, *A Southern Baptist in the White House* (Philadelphia, 1977); John Dumbrell, *The Carter Presidency: A Re-Evaluation* (Manchester, England, 1993), 19–20; and D. Jason Berggren, "'I Had a Different Way of Governing': The Living Faith of President Carter," *Journal of Church and State* 47 (Winter 2005): 43–61.

85. Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime* (New York, 1991), 287–90, 318–19, 486, 757; Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, 142–46; Beth A. Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal: Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War* (Columbia, MO, 1997), 103, 106–8; Frances FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars, and the End of the Cold War* (New York, 2000), 25–27; Paul Lettow, *Ronald Reagan and His Quest to Abolish Nuclear Weapons* (New York, 2005).

86. See, for example, James Carroll, *Crusade: Chronicles of an Unjust War* (New York, 2004); Peter Singer, *The President of Good and Evil: The Ethics of George W. Bush* (New York, 2004); Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York, 2004), 85–86, 379, 421; Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, 127–30; Micklethwait and Wooldridge, *Right Nation*, 147–48, 396; McCartney, "American Nationalism and U.S. Foreign Policy"; Bacevich, *New American Militarism*, 12–13, 122, 145; Kevin Phillips, *American Dynasty: Aristocracy, Fortune, and the Politics of Deceit in the House of Bush* (New York, 2004), 211–44; Kevin Phillips, *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century* (New York, 2006), 99–262; and John B. Judis, "The Chosen Nation: The Influence of Religion on U.S. Foreign Policy," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Policy Brief 37 (March 2005), http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/PB37.judis.FINAL.pdf (September 20, 2005). For hagiographical perspectives, see Stephen Mansfield, *The Faith of George W. Bush* (New York, 2003) and Paul Kengor, *God and George W. Bush: A Spiritual Life* (New York, 2004). For a discussion that does not discuss Bush but does examine the contemporary socioreligious climate and its relationship with recent American foreign policy, see Melani McAlister, "Prophecy, Politics, and the Popular: The *Left Behind* Series and Christian Fundamentalism's New World Order," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102 (Fall 2003): 773–98.

what?" Or as Anders Stephanson asks of studies of travel and tourism and their role in diplomatic history, "What precisely does the 'contribution' . . . amount to?"[87] If studies of religion and foreign relations are to have any impact on the field, they must have causal force; they must be able to illustrate, to some degree, a relationship of cause and effect between religious matters and diplomatic events. Otherwise, the study of religion will have little utility and thus little, if any, influence on the ways in which historians perceive the history of American foreign relations. Again, those who wish to utilize religion should look to the historians of gender and race as exemplars. Even the most hardened skeptic could not dismiss gender as a major factor in the origins of the Spanish-American and Philippine-American wars after reading Hoganson's *Fighting for American Manhood*. And few would now doubt the crucial relationship between African Americans and U.S. diplomacy after reading books by Brenda Gayle Plummer, Mary Dudziak, or Thomas Borstelmann on the subject.[88]

"Religion," of course, is innately different from "gender" or "race," both as subjects of historical inquiry and as causal explanations of historical developments. Depending on one's perspective, religion is neither a biological feature of human existence[89] nor a hegemonic, ideological construct imposed from the outside. To be sure, in many important ways religion is as much a cultural construct as are race and gender, including many of the attendant sociopolitical applications and consequences. But however omnipresent—and, in some societies, perhaps oppressive—it may appear, religion differs fundamentally in that it is both essentially voluntary and escapable. There is an element of choice in the construction of religion that is absent from both gender and race. Patricia R. Hill, a historian of gender who doubts the applicability of religion as a "master variable" in diplomatic history, argues that religion, unlike gender, race, and class, "cannot easily be abstracted as a structural component of social order"

---

87. Anders Stephanson, "Diplomatic History in the Expanded Field," *Diplomatic History* 22 (Fall 1998): 597.

88. Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1996); Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ, 2000); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, MA, 2001).

89. Although many medical and life scientists, and even the occasional social scientist, would now disagree. Two schools of thought—one using genetics and the other evolution—hypothesize that religion is indeed, to some extent, biologically determined. For recent works that argue that religious belief is genetically programmed, see Andrew B. Newberg, Eugene d'Aquili, and Vince Rause, *Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief* (New York, 2001); and Dean Hamer, *The God Gene: How Faith Is Hardwired into Our Genes* (New York, 2004). For recent works that argue that religious belief is a product of evolution, see Pascal Boyer, *Religion Explained: The Human Instincts that Fashion Gods, Spirits and Ancestors* (London, 2001); Scott Atran, *In Gods We Trust: The Evolutionary Landscape of Religion* (New York, 2002); David Sloan Wilson, *Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society* (Chicago, 2002); and Daniel C. Dennett, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* (New York, 2006).

because "it has formal, institutional manifestations and authoritative, sacred revelations as well as informal, popular beliefs and practices."[90]

That religion is a different phenomenon is true enough. But is it so easy to dismiss on this basis? If a historical theory is different according to certain, precise criteria but is generally similar in broader, conceptual ways, can it not have a similar causal effect on the historiography? Arguing for the utility of race, Plummer observes that diplomatic historians "have come to realize that U.S. foreign relations are embedded in complex social, economic, cultural, and political factors of domestic as well as foreign origin."[91] Race, Plummer persuasively demonstrates, is one of these factors, but there is no reason why such a description cannot fit religion as well. Arguing for the utility of gender, Costigliola notes "that causes of historical events and situations . . . tend to be complex and diffuse; that not all aspects of such causes are attributable to single agents or conscious intention; and that the connotations of figurative language have real, although never absolute, causal effect."[92] Similarly, Rosenberg argues that "[s]ensitivity to gender ideology can provide avenues for historians of United States foreign relations to investigate the systems of thought that underlie constructions of power and knowledge."[93] Again, it is difficult to see how these descriptions cannot also apply to religion.

Often a strong link between religious cause and diplomatic effect is apparent—Rotter's examination of American attitudes toward South Asia during the Cold War and Jacobs's examination of U.S. policy toward Vietnam in the 1950s are good examples. The biographical approach, in which a pious policymaker's diplomacy is examined in light of his or her religious attitudes, is also a straightforward method. The example of missionaries—as evidenced by their enormous secondary literature, reflecting a field within a field—is probably the best example of the direct link between religious activity and foreign policy.

But religion can also be useful in more indirect ways. Like race and gender, religion is a powerful force, in both the domestic and foreign spheres, that informs values, norms, and ideas. It is both the producer and recipient, the shaper and the shaped, of culture. Indeed, few human imperatives are as fundamental as the religious. Religion is, and always has been, one of the preeminent forces in American life. On important matters of public policy—especially ones involving decisions of war and peace—there are few who can command as broad, attentive, and responsive an audience as the clergy. Religion can thus help illuminate the intellectual and political origins of any number of diplomatic phenomena, including human rights, collective security, isolationism, morality,

---

90. Patricia R. Hill, "Religion as a Category of Diplomatic Analysis," *Diplomatic History* 24 (Fall 2000): 633, 634.

91. Brenda Gayle Plummer, "Introduction," in *Window on Freedom: Race, Civil Rights, and Foreign Affairs, 1945–1988*, ed. Brenda Gayle Plummer (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003), 3.

92. Costigliola, "Unceasing Pressure for Penetration," 1338. See also Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 9–14.

93. Emily S. Rosenberg, "Gender," *Journal of American History* 77 (June 1990): 121.

preventive and preemptive war, nuclear strategy, foreign aid, imperialism, and interventionism. This is true—one could even argue peculiarly true—of the United States, including its politics, its culture, and its diplomacy. Irreligious, atheistic, or secular elites have not prospered in America. By the more secularized standards of other Western countries, even the figurative descendants of the deist Thomas Jefferson are quite religious and spiritual individuals. In this context, it is the decreasingly religious Europe which is out of step in an increasingly religious world.[94] Rather than the more straightforward political or biographical approaches, uncovering these more indirect influences—what Rotter calls "networks of meaning," in which religion is one of several "filaments that make up webs of significance"—will often require the techniques of the social historian.[95] But it will not be difficult for diplomatic historians to dust for the theological fingerprints on many episodes of U.S. foreign relations. The only trick in doing so will be to decide whether to use a political, biographical, social, or cultural brush.

But no matter how feasible the use of religion is, or how successful it may eventually become, it will certainly not be conclusive.[96] No historiographical interpretation is ever definitive, however powerful or salient or consensual it might seem at the time. There will always exist multiple valid explanations for the same historical development, be it the origins of the Spanish-American War or the Vietnam War. Few scholars know as much about the origins of the Cold War as John Gaddis and Melvyn Leffler, yet on the most important questions of causation they do not agree.[97] This is the very nature of historical inquiry. While deploying religion will not settle outstanding, unsettled historiographical debates, it will complicate, and thus significantly add to, our understanding of U.S. foreign relations. And because of the paucity of religion even within the direct approaches to the study of U.S. foreign relations—case studies, biography, and nongovernmental religious organizations such as foreign missions—it is an understanding that continues to elude diplomatic history. But this means there is also tremendous room for growth.

Yet despite recent encouraging signs and the lack of insurmountable barriers, the histories of American religion and American foreign relations have evolved

---

94. A point made by Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*; and Mark Lilla, "Godless Europe," *New York Times*, April 2, 2006.

95. Andrew J. Rotter, "Christians, Muslims, and Hindus: Religion and U.S.-South Asian Relations, 1947–1954," *Diplomatic History* 24 (Fall 2000): 594.

96. Take, for example, the divided historical opinion about the importance of religion to two of the most celebrated cases—Woodrow Wilson and John Foster Dulles. Of all modern U.S. policymakers, their religious motivations should be the easiest to prove, and yet historians remain deeply divided over just how much the religious views of Wilson and Dulles guided their foreign-policy views. See the references in footnotes 81 and 82. I am grateful to one of the journal's anonymous reviewers for illuminating this point. There will almost certainly emerge a similar historiographical divide over the role of religion in the presidency of George W. Bush.

97. See, for example, Melvyn P. Leffler, "The Cold War: What Do 'We Now Know'?" *American Historical Review* 104 (April 1999): 501–24.

separately and remained apart. This need not be the case. Filling such an enormous (but enormously promising) gap will not be too difficult. Diplomatic historians should take advantage of the different and enlightening perspective of religious history. My three theories explaining the existing reluctance need not pose insurmountable barriers. Exploring the religious dimension of diplomatic history need not become partisan because inquiry and explanation do not equal a rejection of secularism. Just as historians of slavery are not compelled to adopt the moral or political viewpoint of either the slave or the slaveholder, or just as historians of Britain do not feel obliged to accept the agenda of the British government, historians who embrace religion as a subject do not need to argue on behalf of a particular denomination, faith, or belief system. In this regard, secularist diplomatic historians have a worthy predecessor to emulate: as Jon Butler and Edmund S. Morgan have recently pointed out, it was Perry Miller, an avowed atheist, who rescued the Puritans from historical derision and relative obscurity and remains their most influential historian.[98] Finally, while religion is potentially diffuse, imprecise, and unwieldy, the same could easily be said for gender, race, and culture, and few would doubt their causal utility. In short, there are few justifiable defenses for diplomatic historians' agnosticism. Religion's potential is clear. It is now simply a matter of spreading the faith.

98. Butler, "Jack-in-the-Box Faith," 1377; Edmund S. Morgan, *The Genuine Article: A Historian Looks at Early America* (New York, 2004), ix.