THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

SAUL/ZILKHA ROOM

FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND CONSCIENCE: RESTORING CIVILITY, PROTECTING PLURALISM

Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, September 13, 2017

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Keynote Address:

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Panel Discussion:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. GALSTON: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you so much for coming through this drizzly day and welcome to the Brookings Institution. Why is this even occurring at the Brookings Institution, you may ask. The answer, for more than 20 years within the Governance Studies program of which I'm a member we have had a Religion and Public Life program that has engaged in a wide variety of activities and so we at Governance Studies and at Brookings view this as a continuation of our mission.

I'm remiss in my first duty, I didn't introduce myself. I'm Bill Galston, a senior fellow in Governance Studies here at Brookings. This project on religion and public life has been spearheaded for much of its existence by E.J. Dionne, who is not with us today because he's spending a semester teaching appropriately enough at the Harvard Divinity School. So, you get me as second prize.

We are thrilled to be hosting this event which is sponsored by the American Charter Project. Some of you know something about this project, others not so much. Very briefly, and there are people around the room who can explain this at much greater length, the American Charter Project is an effort to return to first principles, to lift the discussion of religious liberty out of the morass of specific controversy in which it's now embroiled, and to remind Americans, all of us, regardless of partisanship, ideology, religious persuasion, or lack of same, about this incredibly important reservoir of principles that we have in common that has helped to constitute our country. Many historians and political philosophers believe that religious liberty was the grain of sand around which the pearl of liberal democracy formed.

So, this is no small topic. This is an essential topic and getting religious liberty right, reminding ourselves of the commonality that we have as citizens of the United States, incredibly fortunate to have their religious freedom and antiestablishment clauses of our Constitution. Many people around the world regardless of their critique of different aspects of the American experience look with envy and longing on our ability to handle religious diversity peacefully. And our first principles have much to do with that.

The American Charter Project will, before the end of the year, its backers and leaders fondly hope, release the American Charter of Religious Liberty. We hope to have a grand signing ceremony. We have outsized aspirations to get former presidents involved in the public exercise. So stay tuned, but we intend this to be as visible a restatement of the first principles of religious liberty as

possible.

We have a jam-packed program for you which includes not only a keynote speaker but also what I'm sure will be a spirited panel discussion. I will introduce the panelists when it comes time for the panel, but now it's not my duty it's my pleasure to introduce the keynote speaker, John DiIulio, Jr.

There are many people of whom it is said that when God made X he subsequently broke the mold, but I have great confidence in introducing John in exactly that vein. He is one of a kind. A superstar academic, a committed participation in civil society institutions, and he has highly relevant experience in the White House. During his academic leave in 2001 and 2002 he served as the very first director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and has lived to tell the tale, and perhaps we'll find out about some of the scars. But in his subsequent life he is the Frederick Fox leadership professor of politics, religion in civil society at the University of Pennsylvania, the first in his family to attend college, and I'm glad he can make that claim legitimately, not everybody can. Outside academic life he's developed programs to mentor the children of prisoners, provide literacy training in low income communities, reduce homicides in high-crime policy districts, and support inner-city Catholic schools that serve low income children.

He's the author or coauthor of over a dozen books and several hundred articles. Many of these books are landmark including his textbook on American government, but some are outright miraculous. Let me give you an example. He wrote a book arguing that the American federal bureaucracy is much too small and he got the Templeton Foundation to publish it. (Laughter) With that, Brother Dilulio. (Applause)

DR. DILULIO: Wow. Broke the mold, that's for sure because you don't want anything too big coming out of those molds. Well, thank you so kindly, Bill, and I'm grateful to you, I'm grateful to my old friend Dr. Byron Johnson of Baylor University, and to the other chairs, co-chairs of the American Charter Project, my old friend Dr. Jacqueline Rivers, she's here somewhere -- there's Dr. Rivers -- and also the imminent Oz Guinness. It's a special treat to be here at Brookings on and off over the past three decades. It's been sort of a home away from home for me on a bunch of different topics: government reform, healthcare administration, and the topic that brings us together today religion in the public square.

As Bill alluded, starting back in the '90s and 2000s really, Brookings really birthed several

major conferences and publications including one White House organized event, one church-state relations, faith-based initiatives, and the civic role of sacred places. One of those Brookings books -- you didn't get Dionne but I'm going to give you a little Dionne just for good measure. One of those books was a volume coedited by the great E.J. Dionne and bringing up the rear, me, and it was published in 2000 and it was entitled “What's God Got to Do with the American Experiment?” and E.J. and I began the book with these words: quote, "One could imagine the question posed in the title of this Book, ‘What's God Got to Do with the American Experiment,’ provoking two legions to mass against each other. They'd offer sharply different accounts of the role of God and organized religion in creating and nurturing the American experiment. In one of you it is America's pluralistic and secular Constitution that has promoted freedom, diversity, and oddly the very strength of America's religious communities. In the other account freedom itself is rooted in a theistic, many would say Judeo-Christian commitment to the inviolable dignity of the individual human being. This argument is as old as the Republic, and in truth the two views are not mutually exclusive," closed quote.

Well, today some 17 years after those words were inked we still -- thank providence or probability -- have not witnessed two legions massing against each other at the civic intersection of religion and politics. Not yet anyway. But there is simply no denying that, as is forthrightly stated in the flyer for today's event, bitter polarization along partisan, ideological, and religious lines seem to have become the norm in today's America, not least with respect to the public discourse regarding religious freedoms, church-state questions, and religious identities.

Make no mistake, the concerns that motivate the American Charter Project are real. Just last week Baylor University released a survey probing how Americans view each other with a section focused on perceptions of atheists, conservative Christians, Jews, and Muslims. The results were well-summarized by the headline on that story, on that survey, that ran last week in The Washington Post. And I quote, " Evangelicals fear Muslims; atheists fear Christians: New poll show how Americans mistrust one another." Yikes. And I probably should just leave it at yikes.

But let me address the polarization challenge for you by offering three sets of observations. First, a puzzle, next a prescription or two or three, and finally a prayer. The puzzle was how we got to this point. People feeling more rabid than reasonable about religion and a politics that

turns religious or cultural differences into fodder for political divisions is absolutely nothing new, and we have in the past witnessed worse, for starters think witch-burning, institutionalized anti-Semitism, and nativist anti-Catholicism.

Now the puzzle is that this is happening now, in the early 21st century, and in the wake of several developments of the last 15 to 20 years that might have been expected to make no discernable difference at all, or if anything to cut the other way. For instance, Robert Putnam and David Campbell in their remarkable 2010 opus "American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us," and much other research as well documents that since the 1960s Americans religious identities have actually become more fluid. Most adult Americans are more inclined than their parents or grandparents were to know and even to marry people of other faiths and more likely to profess as it were that there is no one religious path to being a good citizen or good person and even no one religious path to passing through the Pearly Gates.

By something of the same token, until fairly recently at least most post-2000 national surveys probing Americans attitudes on church-state issues painted a rather decidedly centrist picture. For instance, throughout the 2000s about two-thirds to three-quarters of citizen-supported government funding for faith-based organizations that supply social services and about the same fraction agreed that religiously motivated social service providers tend to be caring, compassionate, and cost-effective. But that majority support for and positive sentiment towards funding faith-based organizations plummeted whenever the proposition extended to funding pervasively sectarian activities or permitting carte blanche accommodations to hire only co-religionists.

The centrist and moderate public opinion on religion in the public square was echoed in this period by courts of law, most particularly I would say in the Supreme Court's neutrality doctrine approach to interpreting and applying the First Amendment's two religion clauses. Politicians joined judges in following the election returns. For all the controversies that surrounded and hounded the so-called federal charitable choice laws that were first enacted in the 1990s three successive presidential administrations, two eight-year democrats sandwiching one eight-year republican, each partially defined its electoral base and supported faith-based and community initiatives or neighborhood partnerships.

Now, we must always of course expect the politically unexpected, but how lukewarm

bipartisanship gave way to red-hot conflict is I think truly a puzzle. I have some answers begat by my reading of the latest social science research that is relevant to this subject, but since social science is the elaborate demonstration of the obvious by methods that are obscure I will spare you unless you dare to ask later on. (Laughter)

As for my prescription I confess before committing the sin that it is one that only an old American government professor could love, namely taming polarization and stoking stability by preaching and practicing three lessons about religion in the public square bequeathed to us by James Madison. Lesson number one is that what Madison in Federalist Paper No. 10 termed "a zeal for different opinions concerning religion" feeds dangerous political factions. No faith is beyond faction and religious pluralism isn't just what nice, broadminded people are supposed to profess. Rather, religious pluralism is essential to containing, if not curing, the mischiefs of religiously fueled factions. As Madison wrote in Federalist Paper No. 51, and I quote, "In a free government the security for civil rights must be the same as for religious rights. It consists in the one case in the multiplicity of interests and in the other in the multiplicity of sects."

Now, I once gave a midterm exam about Madison's vies on religious pluralism and one student wrote, and I quote, "Madison says the way to protect religious rights is for Americans to have lots and lots of sex," S-E-X. That was worth half credit. (Laughter)

The second lesson is that religion can be a tremendously and uniquely powerful civil tonic and a tremendously and uniquely powerful civic toxin. And both with respect to religion as a broad sociopolitical force and with respect to religion as manifests in a particular religious denomination or network or organization it can be both a civic tonic and a civic toxin at one and the same time.

E.J. and I in the aforementioned Brookings volume probably owed Madison royalties when we concluded our introductory chapter as follows, and I quote, "Religious faith can create community and it can divide communities. It can lead to searing self-criticism and it can promote a pompous self-satisfaction. It can encourage dissent and conformity, generosity and narrowmindedness. It's very best and very worst forms can be inward-looking. Religion's finest hours have been times when intense belief led to social transformation, yet some of its darkest days have entailed the translation of intense belief into the ruthless imposition of orthodoxy."

Permit me to personalize this point just a bit. I happen to be a Roman Catholic, a big one, and I am so by cradle and by choice. More precisely, if more confusingly, I am probably best described as a born again Catholic in the Jesuit tradition. My belief in and love for Jesus Christ is not simply my religious identity, it infuses every aspect of my life on a good day. On a good day when I'm behaving myself at least. (Laughter) And as I wrote about in the 2007 book “Godly Republic” many of those who are most important to my own early midlife faith journey were not in fact Catholic but were of other religions and other religious Christian denominations as well including the great Philadelphia Pentecostal preacher, the late great Benjamin "Pop" Smith.

But I do have a special love and affinity for the Catholic nuns who helped to raise, and holding them blameless, helped to educate me. Now, that nuns, N-U-N-S, not nones, N-O-N-E-S, as in the Pew survey showing the rapid post-2007 growth in the number of adults in the U.S., about a quarter of the population now, who self-identify as atheists or agnostics or who say their religion is "nothing in particular." I'd be perfectly happy by the way if 25 percent of all Americans were Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary but I'll leave that off to the side. (Laughter)

But to be serious, the civic tonics-civic toxins reality is well-illustrated by my own Church. For example, last year in 2016 the Penn Program for Research on Religion and Civil Society released a report documenting how the Philadelphia Catholic Church's contribution to the region's economy totals about $4.2 billion annually which is greater than the city of Philadelphia government's $4 billion annual general fund. And the Church's contributions there are concentrated in services to low income children, youth, and families, programs to help the infirm elderly, the dying, and others in need. People of all faiths, people of no faith. The Archdiocese Summer Food and Nutrition Program all by itself is a miracle of care and compassion.

So, that was 2016 but a year earlier, 2015, the same research center hosted a conference on the 10th anniversary of the Grand Jury Report on child sex abuse in the Archdiocese. It is hard to fathom how the self-same religious body that has done and continues to do so much that is so very good could also enable so much that is so very bad. But, thus, it is and there is no blinking at either reality.

In part because religion has been recognized as both a uniquely powerful civic tonic and

civic toxin the Supreme Court has, rightly in my view, effectively singled religion out, out from philosophy, out from other belief systems and other non-religious isms for both special benefits and special burdens. By the same token debates over issues like religious freedom restoration acts, or RFRAs, are or I would argue ought to be at least somewhat agonizing for each person engaged in them because the very same rights and accommodations that can be essential for personal freedom of conscience, to institutional religious freedom, to good words that benefit people of all faiths and of no faith, the very same rights and accommodations that equip and empower religious institutions to generate such significant social and economic halo effects can also sometimes be used not merely to duly exempt religious believers from public laws and regulations to which they would otherwise be bound but to dangerously privilege certain beliefs and discriminatory practices while shielding individuals and institutions from being held accountable or as in the child sex abuse cases from ever being brought to justice.

My fried Bill Galston here is an expert on so many things including the thought of the late, great, Sir Isaiah Berlin. And as Bill will know one of Berlin's favorite borrowed sayings was, "Freedom for the pike is deaf for the minnow." Berlin was ever at pains to caution against what he termed, "The ancient doctrine according to which all truly good things are linked to one another in a single perfect hole or at the very least cannot be incompatible with one another."

Well, the point to remember here is that orthodox religion, orthodox sectarianism, is no more or less inevitably or invariably anti-pluralist than orthodox secularism is or can be. Indeed, a healthy to heavenly respect for the fact that we cannot have it all, that we must make morally challenging choices and tradeoffs, and that life on this earth is full of mysteries as in truths that no one can fully understand. This is at the very heart, the theological core of many great religions. And, indeed, that would include my own such that even St. Mother Teresa could doubt.

Hence it is that the third lesson, one derived more from certain parts of Madison's friendship life than from any words he wrote might be the most timely and important. Let me preface this lesson by making sort of a blunt assertion. Pragmatically speaking, to be a good citizen in a demographically diverse democratic republic does not require a civic nobility but it does preclude civic narcissism. I may be a Catholic of a particular stripe, a very strange stripe perhaps, but there are Catholics of many other types and not only Catholics but Quakers, Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists,

Buddhists, Methodists, Muslims, Mormons, Anglicans, atheists, agnostics, Presbyterians, pagans, Pentecostals, New Agers, nuns, both types, and scores more. What we need is to entertain as sympathetically as possible ideas and values related to different religious traditions including different non-religious traditions, and most particularly to entertain ideas and values on issues of religious freedom and church-state relations that one is for whatever reasons strongly inclined to reject outright as wrongheaded, wrong-hearted, not mine.

So back to Madison. Consider two leaders who Madison knew well and respected lots but who had quite distinct views on religion's civic role. On one arm Madison had his main College of New Jersey mentor, the Reverend John Witherspoon, a Scotch Presbyterian minister who Madison affectionately called the Old Doctor. Witherspoon tutored Madison to believe that there was no way that a free republic could survive without orthodox religion, and not just orthodox religion but in particular orthodox Christianity, and that civil magistrates should be all cut from Christian cloth and be empowered to "punish impiety."

But on his other arm Madison had his friend, mentor, and fellow Virginian Thomas Jefferson whose own religious views, of course, tended a little closer to deism. Jefferson's perspective on religion in the public square was one that the Old Doctor never could countenance. And in the end Madison sided more closely with Jefferson but he appreciated and he respected and he never lost sight of the value of the ideas, the beliefs, the heart of his old friend, the Old Doctor, Reverend Witherspoon. Now, historical footnote, Madison did get fed up with Patrick Henry and his brand of religious conservatism, but that's another story for another conference.

Let me conclude then in preface to my concluding prayer with three terribly, terribly homely suggestions. First, recognize that many 20th and early 21st Century political leaders in each party happen mostly, if not always or entirely, reasonable, well-informed, and well-balanced in their views on religion in the public square. We don't have to romanticize this recent history to believe this but I think it's very important at this time to just recall it.

For instance, harken back to the 2000 presidential contest. In May 1999 Vice President Al Gore spoke about how America's "severest problems and challenges are not just material but spiritual." "I believe strongly, he said, "in the separation of church and state but freedom of religion need not mean

freedom from religion." Two months later, July 1999, then Governor George W. Bush spoke about America's armies of compassion. We will, he said, "keep a commitment to pluralism not discriminating for or against Methodists or Mormons or Muslims, or good people of no faith at all. Government cannot be replaced by charities but it must welcome them as partners not resent them as rivals." Pretty good stuff. Seems like a long time ago.

Second, let's try to be as fact-based about faith-based matters as we reasonably and feasibly can be and let's also try to be open and open ourselves to hearing each other and hearing each other out on each or all sides of given religious freedom and church-state issues. For instance, two colleagues of mine, Professor Marci Hamilton and Dr. Stanley Carlson-Thies, together had a project called Common Ground for Common Good under the auspices of the aforementioned Penn Religion Research Program. Read Marci Hamilton's 2014 book -- it's in its second edition – “God Versus the Gavel.” Read Stan's book coauthored with the late, great Dr. Stephen Monsma “Free to Serve.” If you read “God Versus the Gavel” with an open mind back to back with “Free to Serve” you will get intellectual whiplash. And if you read them back to back with an open mind you might or might not change how you think or feel about the issues and values at stake. But I think you'll surely understand your own empirical and ethical historical premises a lot better and you will quite possibly see the other side or sides of given religious freedom and church-state issues a tad more empathetically than you did before.

We don’t know how to produce empathy. We know how to change behavior at the margins in some conditions but we don't know how to produce empathy. Empathy is a precious thing, once lost can be gone from a society forever. We need more of that and this may be just one, again, very homely way forward.

Third, I would say let's celebrate a little. It's been very dour, sad. Let's celebrate how in a demographically dynamic and diverse representative democracy like ours the civic intersections of religion and politics, the civic lanes that merge into church-state debates are bound to be and ought to be busy and boisterous, not calm and quiet. Honking horns, traffic jams, indelicate disputes about who has the right of way, occasional confusion about the rules of the road, and accidental fender-benders. But let's also at the same time insist emphatically, unambiguously, non-negotiable that one and all always stop far short of the civic equivalent of road rage. There are lines that cannot be crossed and should not

be crossed.

In his book, “The Audacity of Hope”, published in 2006 then Senator Barack Obama described religion in the Senate as follows, "Discussions of faith are rarely heavy-handed within the confines of the Senate. No one is quizzed on his or her religious affiliation. The Wednesday morning Prayer Breakfast is entirely optional, bipartisan, and ecumenical, and the sincerity, openness, humility, and good humor with which even the most overtly religious senators share their personal faith stories can sometimes be a ballast against the buffeting words of today's headlines and political expediency."

So my prayer is that sincerity, openness, humility, and good humor return not only to the U.S. Senate but to the wider society, that we find ways to cauterize if not contain, to rein in if not to reverse the polarization, and that the American Charter Project and kindred efforts are blessed to make a positive and lasting difference. So, let me just stop there and take some questions. Thank you, God bless you. (Applause)

The floor is open and we have a couple of folks. When you ask a question please just identify yourself and if you can ask a question. (Laughter) One that takes few than seven volumes to catalog, thank you. Questions? There's one up here and I know it's going to be a doozy because I know this fellow, I think. Pat, how are you?

QUESTIONER: Pat Fagan, now with Catholic University. A key question seems to me the intersection between morals, and particularly sexual morals and religious freedom. And morals are not just individual because by their very nature they're of the relationship between one and another and then spill over into the community one makes. Are you tackling or will you tackle this I think naughtiest of all the naughty issues within religious freedom?

DR. DILULIO: Well, if you say will I do you mean will the American Charter Project? Byron, you might want to speak to that, you know, you're pretty naughty. (Laughter) Not as naughty as I am but let's just leave this off to the side for now. You never know, in Washington anything could happen.

DR. JOHNSON: Thanks, John, for putting me on the spot like that.

DR. DILULIO: Yes, I've been doing it for years.

DR. JOHNSON: These are issues, Pat, that we do think have to be discussed. The American Charter Project of course has a goal of bringing civility back to these discussions and we think

it's necessary that people of all faith traditions or no-faith traditions be able to have positions that we agree to disagree. This is what we think democracy is all about. So, yeah, we think this project is important because it lays the foundation for discussions that we hope we can have on issues like this, the thorniest of these issues. A little bit later this year, John, we hope to roll out the charter at a major public event and this would just be the beginning of a dialogue that would take on those kinds of issues.

DR. DILULIO: I'm sorry, this is Dr. Byron Johnson of Baylor University.

Let me just say, Pat, quickly to append a few words to Byron's response. Before the event began we were together, the panelists, talking a bit and I mentioned I'm on the board of the Penn Hillel, at Penn, I'm a non-Jew of the Board of the Penn Hillel, and my beat is very much with the orthodox Jewish students. One point, in the last couple of years -- trail bone to these discussions, it happens over kosher food all the time, trail news discussions, and it was like what do Catholics believe about sex? So, I said, well, how serious do you -- and these are very serious scholarly young people -- I said, well, Pope John Paul II wrote this amazing stuff on theology of the body. And they read that and they're like, no, that's not what we had in mind. (Laughter)

And it's an interesting question to look at each of the different religions traditions because when you do, at least what I've discovered is what I thought they taught is not necessarily what they do teach and the variety of opinions and emphases and accents even within the Catholic tradition, maybe even especially in the Catholic tradition, turns out to be a bit more variegated than one might suppose.

All right. Hands are going up everywhere. Right down here, I'm going to go there and then I'm going to go this way. If I don't balance it out you'll -- right here, this gentleman wearing a very nice suit.

REVEREND RIVERS: Don't start, John. Quick question. Next year is the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King. One of the things that's always been very striking to me in the discussion of religious freedom is how infrequently King is invoked as a voice for religious pluralism, religious tolerance and freedom. In what ways intelligently could the 50th anniversary of King -- or just Martin Luther King in general -- be used as a counter narrative to a lot of the toxic craziness? Because King has a commitment to the poor, his idea of freedom is freedom to serve, in what ways could this anniversary use to try to tone down some of the really sectarian nuttiness and reintroduce a figure

which amazingly has not been used at all by anybody for the most part in these discussions of religious freedom? Thank you.

DR. DILULIO: Thank you, that's Reverend Eugene F. Rivers, III. Thank you, Reverend Rivers. Bill mentioned that I wrote a book a year or two ago, it was supported and published by the Templeton Foundation arguing that we need to hire a million more federal bureaucrats. So a memo to any foundations out there, you know, somebody ought to go and publish 300 million copies of a letter from a Birmingham jail and send them out. That could have two possible effects, right? Or even short of 300, we'll take 100 million if anyone wants to pass that.

Number one, I mean, we talk about it all the times and sometimes invoked, hey, religion has had a major role. You can't understand major social movements in American, the abolition movement, civil rights movement, et cetera, et cetera, without understanding the role of religion. We say that, and most of you in this room know that because you're old. (Laughter) But it's not being taught. The role of religion in the social movements and these important transformational movements is not as well understood by millennials as one might hope or think it would be. So just reconnecting Dr. King's religiosity, the fact that he was a religious leader and that he drew not only inspiration from his faith but that's defined him itself as an important thing. And also, of course, his very message which is transcendent.

All right. I'm going to come back over here. Yes, right behind you. Way back there. Take your pick. We can draw straws.

QUESTIONER: Thanks, Tim (inaudible). I guess you could call me agnostic, not spiritual. I'm wondering about how we have the really tough discussions because you were saying what happened since '99 and obviously there is sort of the question of war. And I was lucky enough to edit this chapter by Jack Miles who I believe is out of UC Irvine maybe. I think he's Catholic in the Jesuit tradition. He was basically saying we have to find a way to talk about the geopolitics when there is mass religious strife, whether it's going back to the Reformation in Christianity or what's happening in the Persian and Arab worlds now. But how do we do it respectfully and in a way that doesn't -- because I think part of what happened in this election is people conflate a group like ISIS with Islam as a whole and then that leads to this cycle of increasingly intense targeting. A lot of people are trying to fight against this and

have spoken out but it's almost like we've lost control of it. So, how do we desegregate these things in a respectful way?

DR. DILULIO: Yeah, I wish I knew the answers to such questions and related questions but here's what I would say to you. I've been at the University of Pennsylvania for a number of years and at Penn it's not a religious organization, in fact it was the first non-sectarian really university in the country, but we do have a saint and his name is Benjamin Franklin. (Laughter) So I refer to it as St. Ben's. And at St. Ben's Franklin, not to Penn but to the Library Company of Philadelphia in 1742, '43 gave them a motto. And the motto, which I will not try to pretend I know the Latin even though I was an altar boy post-Vatican II, no Latin -- but it translates into "to pour forth benefits for the common good is divine." You know, Franklin didn't care whether you were an atheist, a Quaker, a Catholic, a Jew, whatever. He gave money to everybody in Philadelphia if he thought they were doing things that were good, if he thought that they were doing things that had civic benefits. So, you go global.

Let's ask what people do. He shall know them by their works. Let's look at what different groups are doing on global poverty. There's been tremendous progress against global poverty, extreme global poverty which is measured pretty -- $2.00 US a day, you know. So, by that measure there's been great progress. By a more reasonable standard maybe the progress hasn't been so great. What are the global faith communities, what are the international -- what are the transnational religious organizations doing to assist with global poverty? The questions to ask first are about what people do, not what they say; how they behave, not what they preach necessarily. Many times the behavior is better than the preaching and sometimes it's not.

And having gotten involved over the last few years in some global projects myself, in particular in China, there is a whole other dimension to this which is if I told you that today in, yes, China, you can look at it in lots of different ways but there's both a kind of push and a pull in the role of religious organizations even working with government to do things in the space of elder care, in the space of left behind children in rural areas and so on. So proceed inductively, right? And then ask the big questions. That may not be a satisfying answer but that's the way I'd approach it.

We're done, folks. (Laughter) I just got the thing. So, thank you very much, bless you. (Applause)

MR. GALSTON: Let me now invite all the panelists to join us. I'm going to introduce the panelists in just a minute and I'm going to be a very moderate moderator. I'm going to try to stay out of the way as much as possible. But I would like to take a minute to celebrate what John Dilulio has just put in front of us. He talked about being a born again Catholic in the Jesuit tradition. I remember the Jesuits had a center at Georgetown, I used to hang out with them all the time, and once a Jesuit and I both had a little bit too much to drink and he leaned over to me and said, "Bill, I'm sure I'm a Jesuit, I'm no longer so sure I'm a Catholic." (Laughter) I thought about that for a long time.

I've also reflected as an amateur demographer on Professor Dilulio's prayer that 25 percent of the population would be members of the particular order of nuns who civilized him to the extent that they succeeded in doing so. And the mind reels at the consequences for Social Security in the rest of our society but that's just me.

Third, you talked about all the good that Catholicism has done as an institution. I'm reminded of a famous story, I think it involved the Bishop of New Orleans, if memory serves, who was asked why the Catholic Church of New Orleans was spending so much time on Catholic schools, educating people most of whom weren't Catholic. And he thought for a minute and replied, "We're not educating them because they're Catholic, we're educating them because we're Catholic." And that has stayed with me. That's Catholicism with a capital C and a small c in the very best sense.

And finally, you invoked Isaiah Berlin to explain this duality, this yin and yang of Catholicism as the source of good and as the concealer and therefore abettor of evil. So, I'll turn around and invoke Reinhold Niebuhr who said famously that original sin is the only demonstrable proposition of the Christian faith. And I think there's a lot to that.

Okay. With that as backdrop, let me introduce the panelists starting with this very familiar gentleman next to me, David Gregory whose career in journalism began at the age of 18 but it didn't end there. He's best known I suppose for his 20 years at NBC news, his 6 years as moderator of Meet the Press, his role as Chief White House Correspondent during the entire presidency of George W. Bush. But I think it's fair to say that he's here today because of his own spiritual journey which culminated in the release of a critically acclaimed memoir “How's Your Faith?”, which has led him into enumerable fascinating dialogue some of which I hope we hear about today.

Second, Joshua Dubois. He's one of the country's leading experts at the intersection of race, religion, politics, and culture. For President Obama he held the same office that John Dilulio did at the beginning of George W. Bush's administration, slightly renamed White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. He wrote the bestselling book “The President's Devotional”, and he now runs a social impact agency Values Partnership where he works with partners from the Gates Foundation to Oprah Winfrey and more to develop community partnerships. And he's been celebrated in numerous publications as one of the real African American leaders of his generation and rightly so in my judgement.

Russell Moore, thank you so much for joining us. Dr. Moore is the President of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptists Convention. Prior to his election to this role in 2013 he served as provost and dean of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where he also taught as a professor of theology and ethics. He's the author of several books as you might imagine including “Onward: Engaging the Culture Without Losing the Gospel” and many others. I think it's fair to say that Dr. Moore is a principled and fearless advocate for religion and religious liberty.

Finally, it's my great pleasure to reunite with Katrina Lantos Swett after two many years. She serves as President of the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice which was established about a decade ago to continue the legacy of her father, the late and I would say great Congressman Tom Lantos who served as the Chairman for the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the first Holocaust Survivor ever elected to the U.S. Congress, and one of the great champions of religious liberty and more broadly human rights in America and around the world. It is wonderful that you are carrying on and expanding his legacy. Dr. Lantos Swett is the former chair and vice chair of the United States Commission on International and Religious Freedom. She now serves as the co-chair of the Board of the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea which sounds like really steady work to me, I must say. (Laughter) And also the Budapest-based Tom Lantos Institute. And she also helps spearhead the annual Anne Frank Award and Lecture. I could go on at considerable length but I should stop there.

Some of you I suspect have come armed for bear with some things you'd like to put on the table. I'm going to begin with a very open-ended question before descending or in some philosophical traditions ascending, to particulars, namely, what is it that has drawn you to this issue of religious liberty and has led you to devote so much thought and in many cases so much of your lives to this issue?

Katrina, why don't we start with you and move this way?

MS. LANTOS SWETT: Well, let me say at the outset what a tremendous honor it is for me to be with such a distinguished group of presenters. We were encouraged, Dr. Dilulio, to respond, discuss, and have replies to your speech, but it was such a tour de force that I was spending much too much time madly scribbling to really thing about probing rebuttals. But if I may in my sort of opening moments, I would like to share a couple of stories very briefly that for me illustrate the dual dimension of why this fight is worth fighting and winning, this fight for a place for religious freedom at the very center of our civic life. And I think these sort of competing stores, if you will, illustrate the different dimensions, the impact that robust protection for religious freedom can have on society, and equally importantly, perhaps ultimately more importantly, the value of religious freedom and religious integrity to the individual.

So, a few years ago I had the opportunity to travel to Berlin to participate in the OSCE's 10th Anniversary Conference on the State of Antisemitism in Europe. And in many ways it was a pretty sobering and disheartening gathering because I'm sure as many of you know antisemitism has been on the rise throughout the EU. As discouraging as the conference was I had an experience there that really reinforced my conviction that in the long run history is not kind to those who trample on the religious freedom of others. And what brought this to a head for me was a brief hiatus, a break I took from the conference to go on a tour of Berlin, just an ordinary bus tour. And the tour guide made the following comment. He said that when the Edict of Nantes had been revoked in 1685 that thousands of persecuted Huguenots had fled from France to the city of Berlin where they ended up becoming really sort of the backbone of the economic and in some senses cultural life of that city.

Now, I love to say you will recall the Edict of Nantes because I'm rarely in an illustrious enough body where anybody actually recalls the Edict of Nantes and today may be an exception to that rule. But for those of you who like myself don't just have that right at the tip of your fingers, the Edict of Nantes which was signed in 1598 by Henry IV of France had granted to the Calvinist Huguenots substantial rights in a country that was overwhelmingly Catholic. And this was sort of a break really from the longstanding notion that the religion of a ruler should be able to determine the religion of those who lived within his kingdom, sort of a concept well-captured in the Latin phrase c*uius regio, illius et religio*, whose realm his religion. So, in that sense we might view the Edict of Nantes as an early advancement,

embryonic but none the less important of this idea of the right to freedom of religion and conscious and its revocation was certainly a huge step backward.

But the key point that I would like to emphasize is that by driving the Huguenots out of their land it was the French who paid a very heavy price on a whole variety of measures and the city that gave them refuge benefitted enormously from their arrival and their inclusion. Honestly, I don't think it's too much of a reach or a stretch for us to think about analogous lessons for us to learn as we today wrestle with ideas about how we welcome those fleeing and how we welcome refugees and those who are being driven out often for reasons of their faith and their religion.

The other story that I'd like to share is a much, much more personal one. It's about my father who, as was mentioned, was a Holocaust survivor. When he was a young boy living in Budapest, a young Jewish boy, he was rounded up with all of the male Jewish inhabitants of Budapest, this was before the deportations began, to be taken to a slave labor camp where he was pressed into very difficult and very menial labor. It so happened that the person in command of the barracks that he was assigned to decided that he would somehow try to burnish -- burnish I don't know what, his bona fides, his credentials, his reputation by getting, which translated as forcing, all of the Jewish boys in this barracks to "convert" to Christianity, to prove something.

And all of them did with two exceptions and one of those exceptions was my father. I don’t know -- it's not something my father talked about -- the other boy who remained his lifelong friend, who was the other one who refused this compulsory conversion, shared it with us. But I like to think that the character that subsequently formed my father into someone who became such a brave and such a bold defender of the rights of all people sort of began in a way at that moment of truth because I think that my father, who was not particularly religious, he had not yet become an agnostic which he would become later in his life, he had faith but he was not a particularly religious individual, but I think he understood at a very deep and at a very profound level that his greatest integrity, the underlying dignity of who he was as a person was implicated in this moment. Somehow he found the strength to value more highly that dignity, that internal freedom of conscience, than he valued his immediate safety and security. So, he refused and was very badly beaten for his refusal.

But I look back to that moment with enormous pride and as something that strengthens

me very deeply. I think that these two stories, one historical one on a macro level, one very personal and very small and much more immediate, make the case to me that this fight, the fight that the American Charter Project is about, that Dr. Dilulio has spoken about, that all of us are gathered here to wrestle with is a fight worth waging because if we in any measure abandon our passionate defense of the right of freedom of religion, conscience, and belief for all people on an equal basis we will have given up something as precious as what my father faced that moment of truth, would he give that up. And we too must summon the courage. We must be willing to take our beatings in public sometimes to defend that right. So, that's why I feel so strongly about these issues and I'm so grateful to be here. Thank you.

MR. GALSTON: Dr. Moore.

DR. MOORE: Well, I care about the issue of religious freedom largely because of a very spotty family history, and by that I mean the family history of my faith community as Baptist Christians. Many religious movements can point back to a beautiful temple or cathedral, Baptists have to point back to prison cells because we have a history of being dissenters including in the American Republic where many Baptists in the founding era did prison time when they were required to, for instance, purchase a license to preach and were told it's really not that much money to pay, to which the Baptists replied it's not a question of how much money it's a question of who has the authority to demand that sort of money over the soul. So, the example of those early Baptists in Europe and in North America is something that has deeply impressed me not only as a Baptist but as an American and as a Christian. There are a couple of reasons why I think that's crucially important and important for us right now.

One is in the area of religion itself. Sometimes I think when we have these conversations about pluralism and civility and freedom we tend to have people who are at the margins of their faith commitments, so people who believe in a sort of generic spirituality but don't really believe very much that is all that specific. I am a very conservative orthodox Christian. I believe all the things that tend to scare secular people such as the necessity of being born again in order to enter the Kingdom of God. That does not mean though that I want to impose my religious views on other people, it means quite frankly the reverse. I believe that there is no way that through government edict a soul can be born again, and I think there is no authority that a government has to inhibit or to suppress the free expression of a religion. So, the only thing that a government can do is to turn people into pretend religionists; a government

cannot actually change the landscape of the human heart.

So, as a Christian I believe this is fundamentally important for religion. I also think it's fundamentally important for us as Americans because a state or a culture that can pave over the deepest commitments and convictions of a heart is a state that can do anything. And frankly even Americans who have no religious commitment at all should be very concerned about protecting religious freedom. We should want the American people to have priorities that transcend the state. It should be best for us if we are a people who are not Americans first in order that we can be Americans best. If all that we have is a commitment to a government or to a state or to a culture we end up with a divisive and often very violent sort of situation. So, I believe in a limit of the state and a limit of a culture that allows people to come to into the public and have genuine and often spirited conversations with one another about things that are quite ultimate knowing what is at stake with the alternative. I often quote an old Texas Baptist preacher who used to say, "Everybody wants theocracy and everybody wants to be Theo." (Laughter) And I think that has proven itself to be true whether the authority that people hide behind to impose themselves on others is a religious text or whether it is a secularizing force of history, the result is not a good one. So, for me I supposed I would agree with the Archbishop of New Orleans that you quoted some moments ago, I'm for religious freedom not because the American people are Baptists but because I am. (Applause)

MR. DUBOIS: Well, thank you so much to Brookings and Baylor for convening this gathering, and to my dear friend John for dealing those powerful remarks. That space between civic toxin and tonic is what I'd love to interrogate just a bit and perhaps focus a bit less on our first freedoms and ideals, even the critical important freedoms of conscience and exercise of religion that I've spent a fair amount of my career working to advance and protect. Instead I'm hoping we can spend a bit of time peering into the gaps, the dark spaces between the existence and awareness of our principles and ideals and the ways that people actually live and die in American today. In a time when our energy and our intellectual capacity, indeed even hope, is in short supply I believe our time is perhaps best spent dealing with those tensions, those gaps. I'm going to jump into one of them and tell a couple of stories as well.

Exactly a month and a day ago I received a frantic call on my cell phone from a member of congregation Beth Israel in Charlottesville, Virginia. It was the day, of course, when white

supremacists mowed down a protestor on an American street with others who were supporting his cause still around him. And there was a day after, an evening, where they marched through the University of Virginia with their torches burning, screaming, "Jews will not replace us." My firm had been doing some pro bono work in the days immediately before August 12th, helping the Charlottesville mayor, a good guy named Mike Signer, prepare for what we all knew was going to be a terrible day and we continued even now to help them pick up the pieces afterward. I should note parenthetically that one thing that gave even greater platform to the terror that led to the loss of that woman's life was ACLU refusing to allow Mike to move the rally to the edge of town because of their defense of principles.

But back to that phone call. There was a woman on the line, we had had a call a couple days before but now she was frantic and in tears because there was a rumor that folks with Nazi armbands and AR-15 assault rifles were leaving downtown and heading to the temple which still had people inside. The question was what would they do when they go there. We were able to get her some intel. from some folks on the ground to sort of give more color and help them prepare. And then Alan Zimmerman, who was the president of the temple, would later tell the full horror story of what happened. Men in fatigues did in fact march over and they stood across the street with their rifles carrying flags with swastikas on them and shouting, " Sieg Heil." As telling and as damaging as that was thank God that that was all that they did in that moment.

Now, Charlottesville is full, and I mean absolutely full -- we've done a ton of work with Monticello on race and slavery and spent a lot of time in that community -- it is full of citizens who embody the spirit of civility that we seek to advance here. Perhaps folks who know better than in other parts of the country, just the principles, the first principles of our founders, that make our country at least on paper strong and yet the terror, and yet the fracture that we just saw and experienced as a country, and yet the loss of human life. What do we do in that gap?

Briefly, another quick story. I remember just the sickening and odd feeling of participating in a funeral on the floor of a basketball court. I was sitting immediately behind the family, actually behind the coffin which you didn't really see on TV, you couldn't really get the full effect of the Reverend Clementa Pinckney in Charleston, South Carolina as the then President of the United States did something that presidents really shouldn't have to do, he delivered a eulogy for Reverend Pinckney.

Reverend Pinckney was slain during bible study, of course, with eight other parishioners simply for being black. We've talked a lot, and I certainly have, of the courageous faith shown by those who forgave the killer and of President Obama's deeply moving *Amazing Grace* but I'm not sure that we fully explored this tension, this gap. What are the cultural forces that could allow that young man to grow up with such antipathy towards other human beings to the extent that he did not see them as human and then work out those feelings in such horrific ways? His family shaped him, his church shaped him, the state educated him, the media he consumed motivated him, public policy allowed him to obtain his weapon, and then he crossed not a theoretical church-state threshold but he crossed the threshold of a church and killed mothers and fathers and grandmothers and grandfathers and a pastor named Clementa. Their freedoms could not protect them from a culture and history that killed them.

I could go on. I was with First Lady Michelle Obama in Oak Creek greeting the families of the Sikhs who were slain at their gurdwara. I remember also sitting at the feet of civil rights giants like Dr. C.T. Vivian and Joe Lowery, folks who are still my friends and mentors to this day, as they explained to me that it was the religious freedom advocates, the civil and moderate and center left and right pastors who were in fact the most dangerous and destructive to the civil rights cause because they thought that their first principles and their civility would save them without interrogating the depths of the evil in the human hearts that they saw around them. It was almost a self-indulgent protection for them. It was an opiate that actually slowed justice down.

We have to explore the gaps between the profession and clear knowledge of our ideals and the way that people live them out in American every day. How could good Christians, even some of those who wrote down our first freedoms, own human beings like chattel for so long and then lynch them long after that? How can people with strong values and a clear sense of their religious ideals share a workplace or a school or a Wal-Mart with immigrant families and then be okay with sending the children of those families back home to countries they've never known? How can a leader of our country have said and done the things that he's said and done and then that be okay with so many people?

I just want to close with the words of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, and I'm so glad that John mentioned this. They are words that he wrote when he was sitting in a Birmingham jail, perhaps one of the most important texts in this space that anyone could read. He was writing to

moderate Christian and Jewish leaders who encourage him to align more closely with the ideals of the country and to operate with greater civility. They kept saying we've got to have more civility because they thought that law and principles and civility would be the most effective way of achieving civil rights.

I encourage those, again, to read the whole letter, but it says in part, "I must make two honest confessions to you," Dr. King said, "my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the negro's great stumbling block in his stride towards freedom is not the White Citizens Counsel or the Ku Klux Klan but the white moderate who is more devoted to order (principles) than justice, who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice, who constantly says I agree with you in the goal you seek but I cannot agree with your methods."

King continues, "We who engage in non-violent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring the surface the hidden tension that his already alive." That's what's happening now; we're bringing this to the surface. "We bring it out in the open where it can be seen and dealt with like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be open with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light. Injustice must be exposed with all the tension its exposure creates to the light of human conscience and the air of natural opinion before it can be cured."

Friends, this is a time when the darkest parts of the human soul are coming to the surface yet again. The answer is not simply civility or the knowledge of our ideals because we have in fact known them, even written them down in times past and civility has never saved us; it just makes us feel good while some others suffer. The answer lies in courageously interrogating the gap between our professed ideals and the ways that Americans live their lives and then working courageously to close that gap. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. GREGORY: I guess I want to add to this discussion by talking just a little bit about the nature of civic discourse, the ways in which we somehow can reconcile religion and politics and political discourse. Joshua said some very powerful things that remind me that I think all of our religious traditions require us to interrogate ourselves, right, and what is the real basis of our own humanity, and ask ourselves what is it that God demands of us as human beings in how we treat one another. In that

way there are some lines that have to be drawn. And the analogy or the metaphor of the traffic jams and the right of way that we have to have people who are those signal guards who put up a stop sign or who say I'm going to draw a line around this and say that this kind of hate is wrong because it's not what God expects of me.

We have in the Jewish tradition discussion of the I and thou relationship and that is that what happens to you matters to me and vice versa because that's our shared humanity.

But these are still hard issues because even within religious communities there is a lot of disagreement, as Joshua pointed out in the Civil Rights struggle. But isn't it interesting to be in Washington, D.C. during a politically polarized time and talk about religious freedom in a way that we might about other issues? And we can talk about charters and we can talk about position papers, and I am a journalist and I've covered the White House, I've moderated Meet the Press. But when I talk about faith even here I'm led to the sacred, I'm always on the verge of tears. And that's because for me it's got to all start with love. And it starts with true humility.

So, the tonic part of civil discourse is to recognize that we spend way too much time in the public square walking around with this chip on our shoulder, with this sense of certainty that we know and you don't know. What we don't do is very comfortably hold on to our vulnerability and show it to each other and say, you know what, I'm confused, I'm angry, I'm frustrated and I just don't know what the answer is but I somehow feel isolated. Because we're not willing to allow ourselves in the social media space to express that kind of doubt. You're not going to get retweeted if you're reflecting the creative tension. You're going to get retweeted, you're going to get resonance if you assert only the righteous path, the sense that I know and that you don't. But it's in holding up that vulnerability and saying this is where I'm motivated. I'm motivated by this tradition and I'd like to know what motivates you. And let's have a conversation. And can we have some exchanges around that we may not be able to agree but we can get to a place where maybe we can understand some things or understand each other a little bit better.

And then there's going to be those where I'm going to say guess what, I may be a journalist, I may be on CNN in the morning, but I'm a Jew. So, for me the concept of how we talk about immigration, I'm going to see that through my Jewish lens which is just that was me, right? I was in the

land of Egypt and so I've got to remember that when I think about the immigrant. By the way, that jibes so nicely with my Americanness, being in a country of immigrants, and part of my Americanness reminds me I've also got to balance that virtue with protecting the country and that's why we have a separation of church and state.

Can't countenance hate. As a Jew, as a Christian, as a Muslim or other, or as an American because we've already been through too much of that in our country and we've seen what the effects of that are.

So, to me, yeah, I'll state the obvious because I think we're all here to support it, I believe in freedom of religion because I believe that people should have as much room as possible to pursue the depth of their own religious tradition and their own spiritual connection with God so that they can get to a place of brining that into the rest of their lives as constructively as possible and that they can share what motivates them with other people. And that if some of that brings some of the humility to have it be more tonic than be toxic. Because it starts with a place of this is where I'm coming from, I don't know what the ultimate answer is, I've got some principles I'm really going to stand on and I'm willing to fight you about it peacefully, but I'm going to fight it and I'm going to assert it, then we can have the debate based on that principle instead of you just don't know and I do and we've got to get more people to come around to my point of view and we're going to assert that and we're going to win in the end.

So, that's where I think having the freedom matters. Let's allow ourselves to be vulnerable. Let's remember to start out with love, let's remember humility, let's remember that everyone has something to give and to contribute in this and then we can have the dialogue from there. (Applause)

MR. GALSTON: Well, I hope everybody in this standing room only audience -- and this is a sign of real commitment, those of you who have been standing for an hour already in the back of the room -- understand just how extraordinary the past half hour has been, how personal, how powerful, and how diverse and how relevant these four different testimonies -- that’s really what they were, four different testimonies -- have been. But I'm going to invite everybody to take up in his or her own way the challenge that Josh Dubois has laid down for us, and let me just spend 30 seconds teeing this question up with a personal story of my own.

As some of you know I was sort of a semi-senior official in Bill Clinton's White House and

on the Domestic Policy Council one of my beats was religion. I was the Domestic Policy Council's point person on the working group that led up to the enactment and signing of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in the fall of 1993. I will never forget the scene on the south lawn of the White House, that glorious fall day when Bill Clinton signed it into law. It was like all of the world's religions had gathered in one space at the same time but there were no foreign ambassadors, they were all Americans. It was such a vivid tableau of not only our diversity but also our unity. The Religious Freedom Restoration act passed the House and the Senate of the United States almost unanimously and 24 years later here we are.

So, here's my question, it's a vague ill-formed question. I think we all the sense that we were in one place 24 years ago and we're in a very different place now when it comes to religious liberty and its role for good and for ill in our civil discourse. So, what has happened? What has the itinerary of the country been in this almost quarter of a century that has led us to the current moment? This is not a university examination; I honestly don't know what the answer is but I do know that it's a pretty important question.

MS. LANTOS SWETT: Do you want us to go down the line perhaps?

MR. GALSTON: However you want. Discuss it.

MS. LANTON SWETT: Well, I wanted to say one thing to Joshua because I so appreciated your phrasing of the gaps and how we have to have the courage to explore those gaps. It made me think of something my late father would often say which is that along with the glorious and very inspiring narrative of American history -- which he believed quite passionately in; he used to call himself an American by choice -- he said the other piece of that is, and another way of understanding our history as a long and struggling process to close what he called the hypocrisy gap, this extraordinary gap between these magnificent ideals annunciated in our founding documents and the reality. So, you are so right that sort of in that purely theoretical, abstract principled sense we can miss the boat of what's really happening.

But, Bill, the question you ask is a huge one. I think that one of the things I believe we need to hold onto as we not only try to understand how we got here 24 years after the passage of RFRA but as we try to figure out our way forward, and that is that as we make what many people will feel

strongly is progress in a lot of arenas that have hitherto been untouchable that relate to bringing people who were previously marginalized and really left out and not included that we find a way to embrace the good of that without disqualifying and putting on the margins and excluding as unacceptable the very deep and sincerely held religious convictions of a huge percentage of our country.

I will say that I was dismayed, I was alarmed last week at a Senate hearing for a nominee for a judicial post to have questions coming from senators whom I know and like and respect at many levels, but questions that sounded uncomfortably close to a religious test for office as they probed in a skeptical way and in an almost hostile way the extent to which the nominee that sat before them had orthodox views from her faith tradition. It felt so wrong, it felt so troubling.

So, I think that as we struggle towards new consensus on public policy about certain issues that open up our shared public civic space to people to whom it should have always been open, and as we make that very important progress that we not view that as an excuse or an opportunity to begin to delegitimize members of our shared civic community and members of our family, our shared family. We don't disqualify them and we don't delegitimize them because of their faithful and sincere adherence to their deeply held beliefs.

MR. GREGORY: I think if we just define this as whether people are entitled to their beliefs then we're missing some of the nuance of what has deteriorated over time. I mean, to me what I'm struck by is the amount of self-righteousness about how religion asserts itself into the public square. And by that, I mean those who are not religious. Secularists have a self-righteousness and an ignorance about them, about faith, because they think that people of faith are rigid, are orthodox, and are trying to shove a certain lifestyle down their throat and therefore they don't want to hear discussion. I think some of the more conservative and the orthodox tend to think of other people along the continuum as somehow having, as you said, Russell, kind of a very marginal religious commitments that may not be quite as authentic.

So, one of the things that I think has to assert itself in the public square, in politics, is progressive theology. I don't think it has gotten quite as much attention, I don't think there's quite as much glue as there is with orthodoxy of all stripes. And I think that turns a lot of people off and I don't think it should because I think what we lack is a proper vocabulary of religious meaning and purpose and

how rooting ourselves as individuals in our religious practice and tradition gets us closer to our best selves.

And that's what organizes us in ways. So, at my synagogue if we're talking about social activism around immigration, you know, that's a good thing. Now, there may be people who disagree about some of the remedies but that's only a good thing as long as it doesn't devolve into we know and you don't know; we're the only right ones and you're all wrong. So, to me that's part of the deterioration that we don't have much room to live in some space of tension.

MR. DUBOIS: I think that's a great question. I'm not sure it's been a deterioration as much as among the communities where there's the greatest tension I'm just not sure there was ever a real relationship at all. So you're now seeking to navigate big, tough issues without any base of relationship and trust between these communities.

So, for example, the conservative evangelical community and the women's community, or the conservative evangelical community and the LBGT community. For the last 20 years if not longer they have not been talking with one another. Some perceive that they weren't allowed to talk with one another, that there would be so much sanction from their own communities that these rooms could not come together. And so now when the big issues are in front of us there is no base of relationship there to navigate those issues. And it's hard to play catch up when the communities believe that the other side has denied their dignity for so long and so why would they come to the table now.

Again, I'm not sure that it's been a downward slide as much as it's sort of rooted in an almost complete lack of relationship for years and now at the time when relationship is needed perhaps more than ever it doesn't exist and the stakes are so high it's tough to come together.

And one last thing I'll mention, more in the global context but also here at home as well, and it's going to sound crazy, but I think men are a big part of the problem. Who are leading the charge in terms of ISIS fighters that are robbing their human dignity and religious liberty? Who did you see marching by and large at UVA and in Charlottesville? I think there's a toxic vision and understanding of masculinity and of feeling threatened and having to reassert one's self in really dangerous and problematic ways and defining oneself on the basis of your ability to convince others of what you believe. Again, I'm no sociologist, I can't exactly point to the cause, but somehow this conversation around what it

means to be a man both here in the United States and around the globe, I think we've got to insert gender into this.

So, it's not all about religion, it's about things like relationship, like gender, that become a part of this toxic brew.

DR. MOORE: I liked John Dilulio's metaphor of road traffic and road rage because I immediately thought of a study several years ago by Colorado State University trying to predict road rage. What they found in the study is that one cannot predict road rage on the basis of the age of the driver, on the basis of the make or model or the automobile. Really the only predictor for road rage at all was the presence of bumper stickers. (Laughter) And it didn't matter what the bumper stickers said, whether or not it was Practice Random Acts of Kindness or My Kid Can Beat Up Your Honor Student, just the presence of the bumper stickers. And the more bumper stickers the more likely the person was to engage in road rage.

Of course, they didn't have data to explain why but they speculated this is probably because the psychology of the sort of person who says I want to telegraph my viewpoints on these issues to random strangers on the road tends to lend itself to a certain sort of passion that comes with that.

I think that's what has happened largely in the American public square which I believe comes from a loss of transcendence in American public life. When there is not a sense of transcendent purpose and meaning people are going to try to find substitutes for that. And what we have largely seen happening in American life is people finding tribal identities in political movements or cultural arguments in a way that often really isn't about coming to a solution to those arguments but about identifying with I am the sort of person who stands here as opposed to the sort of people who stand there. I think that happens across the spectrum and I think it has everything to do with what's happening in terms of religion.

For instance, I often find when I'm talking to people on the progressive left who disagree with me on matters of religion that often there is an assumption that religion is going to go away. So, if there's just enough cultural or political pressure put upon religious believers of whatever stripe, we're just going to nudge you along to where you're going to be anyway, that is demonstrably not the case around the world right now.

But I also find that people in my own tribe, in conservative Christianity, have also acculturated to this sense of statecraft as ultimate. So, for instance, I had a conservative Christian say to me one time, "Why do we need to talk about religious liberty? Let's stop talking about defensive measures and go on offense." And what I said was what you're assuming is that what is offense and what is moving the goal down toward the target can only be done by the state when we're Christians. We believe that the most important reality that we have is the gospel and is the mission of the Church. But there's an assumption that that doesn't matter as much as achieving some legislative wins. I think that's been a loss in American life across the board.

MR. GREGORY: I agree with Dr. Moore exactly because I think it's in faith communities that are experiencing their own struggles for existence and for thriving that they have to find a way of bridging all of the differences within the faith communities to give people a sense of purpose and meaning so that they can coalesce around whether it's activism or kind of shared sentiment. That's why, again, I think vocabulary is important, a vocabulary of inclusiveness that doesn't make people avoid people of faith.

MR. GALSTON: We have a few minutes left in this even for questions from the floor and I see a sea of hands in the same place, interestingly. There is a woman on the aisle with her hand up if the roving mic can reach her, and then I see a couple of others in roughly the same place.

QUESTIONER: Good morning. My name is Leslie Cosgrove, I'm with (inaudible) Village, and I am thrilled to hear you talk about civic toxics and toxins because I was afraid that we weren't going to get to like real people, local level, communities level, more at the policy issue level here today.

I work primarily in Africa at the moment but I also work in Philadelphia and other environments. We've talked theoretically about what those toxins and toxics are but we haven't really talked about the strategies on how to work with people at the local village and community levels in our neighborhoods on how to bring that together. Just some of the last comments you've made indicated the American viewpoint. But where I'm working the religious issues become economic issues, government issues, political issues, and people are very clear about what their religion supposedly is and they become barriers. But I think that the same strategies are probably the same. So, thank you.

MR. GALSTON: Whoever would like to respond, and not everybody has to respond to

each question.

MR. DUBOIS: It's a great point and question. I think people are very clear until they aren't, until they approach the question with a degree of humility that perhaps they did not have before, as David was saying. We've done some work, for example, on maternal and child health on the African continent in context with religious leaders that are not inclined to a conversation about, for example, maternal mortality until you build relationship and slowly work your way into that conversation. And then barriers that are initially assumed to be because of faith reveal themselves to be because of other things, sometimes misunderstandings, sometimes gender dynamics that need to be further explored. And sometimes those barriers can come down.

But it's beginning with relationship and then really bold conversation. I was a little down on civility but I do think there's a space for an active civility, a lived civility. Oftentimes we assume that civility means being silent, it means being just quiet and nice and humble and so forth, but when you see something that's wrong or when you see something that you just know in your gut is a violation of some of these first principles we need sort of boldly and actively civil people to speak into that. That doesn't mean you have to scream into it, it doesn't mean you have to violate community and human norms while you do so, but I think having the courage to have those tough conversations is a big part of the answer. So, hopefully that addresses your question.

MR. GALSTON: Thank you. There is a hand at the end of the very same row, that gentlemen there.

QUESTIONER: Hi, I'm Nick Little, the legal counsel for the Center for Inquiry, a secular humanist organization representing the plurality of Americans that are non-religious that have no religious affiliation. We've talked about pluralism and it's been very much on the basis of within religion and nobody has mentioned how you reach out to the fastest growing, the plurality of Americans that have moved away from organized religion on this. How do we do that? How do you bring us to the table to work with you on this when we see, for example, the President stand up and say, "American's don't worship government, they worship God," and we didn’t hear a single voice from in particular the conservative religious groups turning around and saying, hey, no, maybe there are many Americans that don't worship God. How do you bring us to the table?

MR. GALSTON: A fair and necessary question.

MS. LANTOS SWETT: Well, I think some of us up here at the table today have tried to convey the power of storytelling in a way to change how people see a situation. And I think not in the American context but in the international context about the incredibly compelling story of a young man in Saudi Arabia, Raif Badawi, who some of you may know of, who for the crime of being an agnostic, of not having orthodox beliefs within that very theocratic society has been sentenced to ten years in prison and was originally sentenced to a thousand lashes which were intended to be administered at the rate of 20 a week. It was sort of a slow-motion death sentence.

I do think that compelling stories like Raif's that show such integrity, such personal courage, in defense of his conscience rights, his ultimate beliefs, I think in the Charter, the American Charter that's sort of getting a soft launch today, it talks about us needing to have a deep reverence -- which may sound like a religious word but it shouldn't be a religious word, it should be a civic word -- we need to have deep reverence for the ultimate beliefs of all people because we know, we sense, we feel in our own gut that it goes to the very essence of our humanity, to the very essence of our dignity.

I think you're raising a really tough question because we are a religious nation for the most part, it is changing. I'm a very religious person, but I was so moved by Raif Badawi's story. I think that we see a lot of the progress that was made for gay rights came out of storytelling, not standing on soapboxes and arguing exclusively from principle but sort of building relationships, as Joshua says, and telling stories.

So, it's not a policy answer but I think it's a piece of that puzzle, is opening the eyes of more religiously inclined fellow citizens to the conviction and the integrity and the personal devotion of those whose beliefs are secular or humanist or agnostic or atheist. That builds that common bridge of shared admiration, and it works best when it's a two-way street.

MR. GALSTON: I don’t want to practice geographical discrimination, so I see a hand in the back of the room and that unfortunately, given the constraints of time, will have to be the last question and then I'll briefly wrap up. Yes, ma'am.

QUESTIONER: I'm trying to see how to pose this question, so I'll start like this. One, I think somebody said how do you bring certain people to the table so I'm just saying we want black

churches brought to the table. Somebody said it up there because we need to be a part of what you all are doing. And somebody said how do you build a base of trust in communities, it's more people need to be involved because we're still separated. Churches are separated against churches. Just like you said, the Baptists, well, guess what, I'm Pentecostal, so I don't know who wants me at the table. (Laughter)

So, I thought about Dr. Stanley here who has started a movement of bringing black churches together and they've had a couple of sessions, but I would love to see it at a higher level, Dr. Stanley, when we have the people at the table up here and we get the convention center, something, because we have so much to talk about, and it's so much separation. I just want to know how can we get you all to bring us to the table. That's my question.

MR. DUBOIS: It's a great point. I would just agree that black churches do need to be at the table, they're some of the folks for whom religious liberty matters most, have been some of the great defenders. The Rivers family here has been doing tremendous work in that space, helping the black church have conversations around religious liberty, but just to affirm your point.

DR. MOORE: I would just also like to say that it's not only that the black church is essential in terms of religious freedom as a principle, but also because the black church can teach the rest of American how to answer some of the previous questions that have been asked here already. Reverend Rivers mentioned Martin Luther King and the 50th anniversary of his assassination next year. What strikes me about Dr. King that we need the most right now is the fact that Dr. King was not in his writing, in his speaking, he was not speaking only to those who were already with him, he was speaking to my grandfather in Mississippi that he never saw as being anything less than a potential convert to his cause and to his way of seeing things.

That's one of the great problems that we have in American life across the board, is that we don't ultimately believe that we're going to be able to persuade one another of anything and so we assume that all we can do is to push one another into their categories and to speak about them rather than speak to them. Dr. King spoke to the conscience, I think that's an important point.

MR. GREGORY: Can I just make one point? Russell, you mentioned tribalism before in American politics and how religion intersects with American politics. I think there is work that can be done with leaders like all of you with media as a community to help educate and to help develop the language

of faith so that it is not so foreign in the discourse of media, so that there can be real informed dialogue about religious difference, about no religion at all, about the full spectrum here about the pursuit of meaning and purpose, and that you can go to efforts to really knock down those walls by convening together, churches, black churches, and otherwise gathering together.

But trying to raise the level of education of those in the media about the world of faith and why it is so motivating for people, to bring it into the public square, to really good ends and not allow the media to take it as just a way to further polarize people. I think it's a really kind of outward-facing mission too for the Charter.

MR. GALSTON: This brings us to the end, and in about two-and-a-half minutes I'd like to do a number of things simultaneously. First of all, following on what David Gregory just said, I would like to note with deep sorrow the recent passing of Michael Cromartie, whose project Faith Angle did more to bring awareness of religion and knowledge of religion into the press corps and to coverage of religion than anybody else in the country by far. And by God, do we need him now. I hope very much that somebody will pick up that mantle. I miss him.

Second, but not last, I think that our keynote speaker, John Dilulio, and the four panelists here have been extraordinarily generous, honest, humble, giving, and illuminating, and I think we all owe them not only a debt of gratitude but a round of applause for their contributions. (Applause)

Third, I'd like to thank Josh Dubois in particular for unravelling one of the many mysteries embedded in John Dilulio's speech, the idea of the toxicity of religion. And you've explained it in two very simple words: testosterone poising. (Laughter)

Fourth, I spent 30 years as a college professor so you'll have to forgive me for adding to your reading assignment. We've already heard about Martin Luther King's letter from Birmingham jail, but as I heard Dr. Moore speak I was reminded all over again of one of my favorite documents in American political history, namely James Madison's “Memorial and Remonstrance,” which laid out what we all have been talking about in terms so clear and unmistakable that I think every American should reacquaint him- or herself with that document.

The benediction will be the very last words that Franklin Roosevelt ever wrote and he died before he had a chance to deliver them. They would have been the conclusion of his final radio

address. He said, "Let us move forward with a firm and active faith." Amen, and thank you. (Applause)

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