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'Religious Voices in Public Places': John Macmurray on Church and State[1]

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Macmurray's philosophy is eclectic and has found sympathizers in a number of disciplines; Frank Kirkpatrick's published monographs draw on Macmurray's ethics, while Julian Stern and Michael Fielding are concerned with the application of Macmurray's account of persons in community in State education.[2] In addition Macmurray is influential in the field of politics; Kirkpatrick's most recent work on Macmurray focuses on political philosophy, while reference to Macmurray in the public domain stems largely from claims made by the former British Prime Minister, Mr Tony Blair, that Macmurray's work has influenced him.[3] Hence, this paper aims primarily to tease out the extent to which Macmurray's philosophy of community is or is not evident in Blairite politics; secondarily, to introduce the philosophical notion of supervenience to explain the relation between religious reasons and secular reasons in public debate; and finally to provide an example of a contemporary 'community' that satisfies the essential criteria of Macmurray's definition. In addition to revealing the contemporary relevance of Macmurray's work, this paper engages with an ongoing international conversation on the ethics of religious voices in public places.[4]

In *Religion in the Public Square* Robert Audi states that 'the ethics appropriate to a liberal democracy constrains religious considerations . . . because of

[1] I have borrowed the phrase 'religious voices in public places' from the subtitle of the first 'Religion and Political Liberalism' colloquium organized by Nigel Biggar, Institute of Religion, Ethics and Public Life, School of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds, 2–4 June 2003.

[2] Frank G. Kirkpatrick, *The Ethics of Community* (Oxford, 2001) and *Community: A Trinity of Models* (Washington, 1986); Julian Stern, 'John Macmurray, Spirituality, Community and Real Schools', *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 6:1 (April 2001), 25–39; Michael Fielding, 'Community, Philosophy and Education Policy', *Journal of Education Policy*, 15:4 (2000), 397–415.

[3] Frank G. Kirkpatrick, *John Macmurray: Community Beyond Political Philosophy* (Lanham, 2005).

[4] The conversation formally began in the School of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds in June 2003 with the first of a series of international colloquia on 'Religion and Political Liberalism', the second of which took place in June 2006 hosted by the Institute for International Integration Studies and the School of Religions and Theology, Trinity College, University of Dublin.

its commitment to preserving the liberty of all'.[5] On the contrary, Nicholas Wolterstorff states: 'I see no reason to suppose that the ethic of the citizen in a liberal democracy includes a restraint on the use of religious reasons in deciding and discussing political issues'.[6] Audi's position rests on the assumption that virtuous citizens 'try to contribute in some way to the welfare of others'[7] and that in a religiously diverse society this means having secular (non-religious) arguments for supporting public policy. In other words, Audi maintains that religious justification for public policy restricts the freedom of those who do not hold to that religion, whereas secular reasons are available to all citizens. Wolterstorff, on the other hand, argues for the inclusion of religious reasons in public debate on two grounds: first, he maintains that respecting the freedom and equality of other citizens rests on genuine debate rather than religious constraint; secondly, he argues that persons with religious reasons cannot leave them out of the debate, since 'we cannot leap out of our perspectives'.[8] Consequently, there is something of an impasse between Audi and Wolterstorff concerning the use of religious reasons in public debate.

It is my contention that we can find a middle ground between the positions espoused by Wolterstorff and Audi by considering Macmurray's account of Church-State relations and, further, I propose that religious reasons *supervene* on secular reasons.[9] Through the use of Macmurray's work and the notion of supervenience, in addition to carrying on the Wolterstorff-Audi debate and the conversations of the aforementioned colloquia, I will put forward an objective response to the recent media frenzy occasioned by Tony Blair's remark that God will judge his decision to go to war with Iraq; a comment made when he appeared on the talk show *Parkinson* in March 2006,[10] ending with a practical example of community-building amongst religiously and culturally diverse citizens.

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[5] Robert Audi and Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Religion in the Public Square: Debating Church and State* (Lanham, 1997), 174.

[6] Ibid., 111–112.

[7] Ibid., 16.

[8] Ibid., 113.

[9] I am using the term supervenience to mean that where there is a difference in religious reasons there must be a difference in the secular reasons.

[10] Michael White, "God will judge me", PM tells Parkinson, in *The Guardian*, 4 March 2006.

Macmurray's philosophy

Macmurray's influence in philosophy can be harder to detect than his influence in other subjects. The 1998 Routledge *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* does not have an entry on Macmurray (although Macmurray is mentioned in the entry on Norman Kemp Smith); nevertheless, the 2005 Thoemmes/Continuum *Dictionary of Twentieth-Century British Philosophers* does contain an entry on Macmurray. According to Macmurray, his thesis is 'that the Self is constituted by its relation to the Other; that it has its being in its relationship; and that this relationship is necessarily personal'.[11] A personal relationship is one in which persons are related as equals, rather than on the basis of their roles; it is then a friendship. In accordance with the central tenet of Macmurray's thesis, he states that, 'Friendship is the supreme value in life and the source of all other values'.[12] For Macmurray, therefore, friendship (characterized by love, care and trust) operates both as a description of person-to-person relations and a prescription for the way in which we ought (morally) to relate to our fellow human beings. In addition, as Macmurray unpacks his thesis he reveals that his interest in the moral aspect of the relations of persons is intimately related to his concern with justice. He states:

> Justice is that negative aspect of morality which is necessary to the constitution of the positive, though subordinate within it. Morality can only be defined through its positive aspect, yet it can only be realized through its own negative. Without justice, morality becomes illusory and sentimental, the mere appearance of morality.[13]

Hence, Macmurray's moral philosophy is a political philosophy also.

Moreover, Macmurray's work on the relationship between justice and love turns out to be an account of his view of the proper connection and space between political institutions and religious ones. He defines religion in such a way as to render his work on the relations of persons a religious as well as a moral and a political philosophy. It is Macmurray's contention that 'religion has its ground and origin in the problematic of the relation of persons, and reflects that problem'; in short, 'religion is about the community

[11] John Macmurray, *Persons in Relation—The Form of the Personal, volume 2* (London, 1995; 1961), 17.

[12] John Macmurray, *Ye Are My Friends* (London, 1979), 4.

[13] Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 188–9.

of persons.[14] We might expect, therefore, to find that Macmurray's work is influential amongst theologians, religious studies scholars and religious philosophers. Indeed, according to Tony Blair, 'it is easy to see his [Macmurray's] influence in a whole generation of Christian philosophers'.[15] Blair does not state which philosophers he has in mind here, but it is clear that he is referring to the Macmurrian emphasis on a spirituality that is embedded in this-world, as opposed to being merely abstract or implying withdrawal from reason. Whether this-worldly spiritually owes anything to Macmurray or not, Blair has been partly responsible for the revived and expanding interest in Macmurray scholarship.

Macmurray and Blair

However, we must be cautious about the connection between Blair and Macmurray lest this distort Macmurray's political philosophy. At first glance it might be reasonable to assume that Macmurray's alleged influence on Blair is to be found in the notion of community; this is both a primary topic in government rhetoric and a key theme in Macmurray's writings. For example, in reference to Macmurray Blair writes:

> he [Macmurray] confronted what will be the critical political question of the twenty-first century: the relationship between the individual and society … he [Macmurray] places the individual firmly within a social setting–we are what we are, in part, because of the other, the "You and I". We cannot ignore our obligations to others as well as ourselves. This is where the modern political notions of community begin.[16]

Then in his 2000 Speech to the Women's Institute, Blair states that 'our fulfilment as individuals lies in a decent society of others … the renewal of community is the answer to the challenge of a changing world'.[17] These (and other similar) statements made by Tony Blair have led to the assumption that Macmurray is

[14] Ibid., 157.

[15] Tony Blair, 'Foreword', in Philip Conford (ed.), *The Personal World: John Macmurray on Self and Society* (Edinburgh, 1996), 10.

[16] Ibid., 9.

[17] Tony Blair, 'Speech to the Women's Institute' (2000), cited by Sarah Hale, 'Professor Macmurray and Mr. Blair: The Strange Case of the Communitarian Guru that Never Was', *Political Quarterly*, 73:2 (2002), 191–7, 192.

a communitarian; however, what Macmurray means by community and what Blair means by community are not one and the same thing. In fact, Sarah Hale argues that 'Blair's "philosophy"…is markedly different from Macmurray's and frequently in stark opposition to it'.[18]

In the Blairite quotes cited above the terms society and community are used interchangeably, and yet Macmurray deliberately distinguishes between these terms, only using the term community to apply to a specific sort of relationship that is much more than a social relation. At other times the government is guilty of the fallacy of equivocation using the term community in two different senses. For example, as Hale notes, in Blair's speech to the Women's Institute he uses the term community to refer both to 'villages, towns and cities' and to our 'fulfilment as individuals', and in Gordon Brown's Speech to the National Council for Voluntary Organization he uses the term community to refer to 'common needs, mutual interests, shared objectives, related goals' and to the fact that 'we depend upon each other'.[19] Yet in Macmurrian thought, while personal growth and fulfilment are possible only in communities, groups identified as villages or defined primarily as having shared objectives are societies, not communities.

The focus on community in New Labour policy is similar to the contemporary communitarianism that Amitai Etzioni expounds, where self-fulfilment is tied closely to social responsibility.[20] In particular, Hale argues that it is Blair's emphasis on rights and duties or responsibilities that render him a communitarian. However, as Samuel Brittan explains, Macmurray is not a communitarian in this sense; that is, Macmurray does not render community exclusive in this way.[21] In a Blairite community covenants and contracts are central; such that duties and responsibilities have to be fulfilled in order for rights to be granted. (For example, the 'right' to unemployment benefit is granted only if the duties to train for, apply for and take jobs are fulfilled.) Macmurray, on the other hand, uses the term community to refer to unconditional relationships of care and concern for the welfare of others, including their economic welfare.[22] Within a Macmurrian community, responsibility is not something you owe or are required to perform in order to access benefits, rather, responsibility is

[18] Ibid., 192–3.

[19] Gordon Brown, 'Speech to the National Council for Voluntary Organization' (February 2000), cited by Hale, 'Professor Macmurray and Mr. Blair', 194.

[20] Amitai Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community* (London, 1995).

[21] Samuel Brittan, 'Tony Blair's Real Guru', *The New Statesman*, 7 February 1987, 18–20.

[22] See John Macmurray, *Constructive Democracy* (London, 1943), 21 where Macmurray insists that material resources are essential for community to flourish.

exercised when persons recognize the extent to which their actions affect and limit the actions of others and, therefore, avoid acting so as to curtail another's freedom to act.[23] Furthermore, New Labour seeks to promote community by encouraging service. A Cabinet Office paper, Hale reveals, states that by the year 2010 community work should be both part of the criteria for university entrance and part of the undergraduate degree programme.[24]

In a number of places Macmurray does write about the idealization of servitude (especially as it appears within traditional Christianity), but he is severely critical of it. In his first monograph, *Freedom in the Modern World*, Macmurray sets out three kinds of morality, which he refers to as mechanical, social and personal morality. He defines mechanical morality as 'obedience to law'[25] and claims that this is false morality, since it treats humans as 'automaton' rather than free agents. Social morality, he explains, 'talks always of service … duty … to serve others, to serve our country, to serve humanity'[26] and, as with mechanical morality, Macmurray insists that social morality is a false morality, because it 'subordinates human beings to organization'.[27] Macmurray contends that true morality is found where persons exist in communities of friendship, such that each is free to express her or his nature and grow as a person; hence, he calls this 'personal morality'.[28] Clearly then Blairite policy reflects what Macmurray defines as social morality rather than what he refers to as personal morality or community. Thus, Hale states: 'Far from providing the philosophical basis for New Labour's "communitarianism", Macmurray's writings constitute a very plausible philosophical ground from which to condemn it'.[29]

Nevertheless, Bevir and O'Brien offer a more sympathetic reading of the relationship between Macmurray's thought and Blairite communitarianism along the lines of social humanism. In their paper 'From Idealism to Communitarianism: The Inheritance and Legacy of John Macmurray', they state:

> This tradition [social humanism] unfolds from the Victorian and Edwardian idealists, including Edward Caird and T. H. Green, through

[23] Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 190–1.
[24] Hale, 'Professor Macmurray and Mr. Blair', 196.
[25] John Macmurray, *Freedom in the Modern World* (London, 1932), 184.
[26] Ibid., 193.
[27] Ibid., 195.
[28] Ibid., 199.
[29] Hale, 'Professor Macmurray and Mr. Blair', 197.

> intermediaries, such as Macmurray, to contemporary communitarians, whether politicians such as Blair or philosophers such as Ronald Beiner, Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor and Michael Walzer.[30]

They make the plausible claim that Macmurray's emphasis on community in action, in response to his experience of the First World War, is a development of the notion of community of Spirit found in idealists such as G. W. F. Hegel and T. H. Green. Moreover, they argue, Blairite communitarianism is a further development of Macmurray's concept of community, in response to contemporary multiculturalism and a loss of solidarity. Consequently, and more contentiously, Bevir and O'Brien suggest that, if we see liberalism and communitarianism as growing out of social humanism (and thus both being concerned primarily with communities of fellows), the antagonism between them is reduced.[31]

In contrast to Hale, Bevir and O'Brien argue that Macmurray is not entirely opposed to liberal institutions. This is a valid claim, since, for Macmurray, indirect relations and, therefore, covenants and contracts, are a necessary component of the personal relations that constitute community. Moreover, as Bevir and O'Brien point out, contemporary communitarianism has to respond to the challenge of multiculturalism; that is, it has to account for cultural difference, whereas Macmurray assumes a 'Christian' community, albeit with severe criticism of its institutionalized forms. Hence, while Macmurray may have an over-optimistic view of unity along Christian lines (which fails to address competing accounts of human fulfilment), contemporary communitarianism may well have stressed difference at the expense of a coherent concept of community.

Nevertheless, while Hale suggests that this leads Blair to abandon the commitment to a welfare state found in Macmurray's work, Bevir and O'Brien maintain that Blair has had to rework welfare in response to an increased lack of solidarity.[32] That is, since British society is less willing to pay higher taxes in order to fund welfare than previously, New Labour has had to introduce the notion of New Right, whereby state provision is closely tied to an individual's

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[30] Mark Bevir and David O'Brien, 'From Idealism to Communitarianism: The Inheritance and Legacy of John Macmurray', *History of Political Thought*, 24:2 (2003), 305–29, 306.

[31] Ibid., 322–3.

[32] Ibid., 327.

responsibility and duty of self-improvement. Thus, rather than having the overriding principles of inclusion, shared experience and care for all others, which Macmurray held to underpin the community of persons, Bevir and O'Brien claim that community under New Labour holds the needy individual responsible for accessing benefits and avoiding exclusion.

In agreement with Hale, we can accept that Blair diluted Macmurray's notion of community and over-emphasized the duties of the individual, seeing covenants as the end rather than a means to an end. However, in reply to Hale's negative reading of the Macmurray-Blair relation and in agreement with Bevir and O'Brien, we can see that contemporary multiculturalism presents the concept of community with a challenge that Macmurray did not face, requiring a more nuanced understanding of difference than Macmurray provides. Moreover, Macmurray insists that politics cannot create community, although it can provide the conditions necessary for community to flourish.[33] Perhaps, then, if New Labour paid more attention to the creation of a just society, through covenants and contracts, and left the language of community out of their speeches, it might have more in common with Macmurray's enterprise than is suggested by Hale.

On the other hand, Macmurray also makes the point that, if religion does not rise to the task of creating and sustaining community, politics will outstep its proper boundaries and seek to enforce it.[34] While true community cannot be created by force, we could interpret the lack of solidarity to which Bevir and O'Brien refer as an indication that the State is having to attempt the creation and sustenance of fragile communities. Consequently, the diluted form of community to which government speeches refer, while at odds with Macmurray's vision of a personal community and unlikely to succeed, may be an example of the political attempts at a community that Macmurray's theory warns us about. It is then to Macmurray's account of Church-State relations that we now turn.

Macmurray on Church-State relations

As we have mentioned, Macmurray makes a distinction between the definition of a society and the definition of a community. He states:

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[33] John Macmurray, *A Challenge to the Churches: Religion and Democracy* (London, 1941), 15–16.

[34] Ibid., 14.

> There are groups which consist of people co-operating for certain specific purposes, like trade unions, or cricket clubs, or co-operative societies. There are, on the other hand, groups which are bound together by something deeper than any purpose – by the sharing of a common life.[35]

For Macmurray only the latter type is properly referred to as a community. In his Gifford lectures he states that 'The members of a community are in communion with one another, and their association is a fellowship'.[36] Nonetheless, society and community are not to be understood in mutually exclusive terms, but rather as 'two elements of unity which enter into all groups'.[37] A society therefore may exhibit differing degrees of community at any given time, just as every community will also require the functional relation of its members to deal with practical matters. (Thus, we may enter into friendships with our work colleagues and we may need a dish-washing rota in the family home.)

However, according to Macmurray, individualism and the break down of communal bonds leads to an over-emphasis on the functional aspects of life.[38] On the contrary, Macmurray argues that life is 'more-than-functional'; he illustrates this point with the example of eating; while we eat for nourishment, eating is often a social occasion and an opportunity for fellowship.[39] Hence, Macmurray states that 'The functional life is *for* the personal life; the personal life is *through* the functional life'.[40] In today's language of work-life balance then, Macmurray is insisting that we work to live and not live to work, because, he states, 'it is through our personal relationships that we become individual persons'.[41]

According to Macmurray, the personal or more-than-functional aspect of life 'is the life of community'.[42] Moreover, he maintains that 'Religion is

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[35] Ibid., 22.

[36] Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 146.

[37] Macmurray, *A Challenge to the Churches*, 22.

[38] John Macmurray, 'People and their Jobs', talk 1 from series 'Persons and Functions', *The Listener*, 26 (1941), 759.

[39] John Macmurray, 'Fellowship in a Common Life', talk 2 from series 'Persons and Functions', *The Listener*, 26 (1941), 787.

[40] John Macmurray, 'Two Lives in One', talk 3 from series 'Persons and Functions', *The Listener*, 26 (1941), 822 (original italics).

[41] Macmurray, 'Fellowship in a Common Life'.

[42] John Macmurray, 'The Community of Mankind', talk 4 from series 'Persons and Functions', *The Listener*, 26 (1941), 856.

concerned with community. Politics is concerned with society'.[43] On a broader scale, it is apparent that the organization of the functional aspect of human life, the relation of humans as citizens, is the arena of politics, but Macmurray contends that 'community can only be properly expressed and nourished by religious institutions'.[44] Nevertheless, Macmurray is highly critical of the other-worldly institutionalized religion with which he is familiar and of the associated prevalent perception of religion as an individual and private affair. He states that 'individualism is incompatible with religion because it is incompatible with social unity'.[45] For Macmurray, 'Religion is concerned with the relations of people as persons, in their character as human beings'.[46] Thus, when Macmurray argues that community is created and sustained by religion, he is referring to a 'reflective activity which expresses the consciousness of community'.[47] In brief, he states that 'religion is the celebration of communion'.[48]

If, then, the religious aspect of life is synonymous with the personal aspect of life and the political is synonymous with the functional, on the basis of Macmurray's principle for proper work-life balance, we can assert that politics ought to serve religion and not vice-versa. As Macmurray argues, 'the State is *for* the community; the community is *through* the State'.[49] Consequently, Church and State have distinct but interdependent roles. Church and State do not exist independently because the functional and personal aspects of life are not separate lives; they can be separated at the theoretical level, but not at the practical level.[50] Thus, the Church's communal bonds are imaginary without co-operation for a common purpose and provision for one another's needs, and the State's sense of common purpose is minimal without some degree of communal life making co-operation possible. Hence, Macmurray states that 'A good political and economic system is one which provides as fully as possible for the personal life of its citizens, and for all of them equally'.[51]

In addition, Macmurray is arguing that the proper limits of political control are set by religion; he suggests that 'in a sane world, religion will control

[43] Macmurray, *A Challenge to the Churches*, 24.
[44] Macmurray, 'The Community of Mankind'.
[45] Macmurray, *A Challenge to the Churches*, 16.
[46] John Macmurray, 'Explanatory Statement' from series 'Persons and Functions', unpublished typescript, 19 September 1941 (The John Macmurray Special Collection, Regis College Library, Toronto: Item 41.12).
[47] Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 162.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Macmurray, 'The Community of Mankind' (original italics).
[50] Macmurray, 'Two Lives in One'.
[51] Macmurray, 'The Community of Mankind'.

politics'.[52] The subordination of religion to politics is the extension of Macmurray's principle concerning work-life balance and the means by which the good life; that is, the life of community and therefore the development of persons as persons, is safeguarded. He states: 'If the inequalities of the functional life are not subordinated to the deeper equality of human fellowship, they become absolute, and community perishes'.[53] Moreover, Macmurray warns us that where religion is too weak to create and maintain the internal bonds of fellowship, politics will be expected to impose external bonds of unity.[54] However, when politics controls religion, totalitarianism results, making 'the State the arbiter of spiritual values'.[55] In essence, then, Macmurray is arguing that religion is essential to democracy. In fact, Macmurray claims:

> So long as religion is excluded from the competence of political authority, everything is excluded which democracy requires. And religion could of itself enforce the limitation of political authority which democracy demands. Indeed, in the long run, only religion is capable of doing this.[56]

For Macmurray, then, democracy is closely bound up with community, since democracy operates on a principle of equality, and it is communities of fellowship that override functional inequalities. Politics can provide the conditions required for societies to develop into communities of equals by creating systems of co-operation, which seek justice through law, but communities cannot be created by force.

Religious voices in public places

Thus, Macmurray does have a liberal democratic policy, viewing religion and politics as having different, but interdependent roles. Hence, he reminds us not to expect politicians to administer to every area of life. In relation to New Labour rhetoric, Macmurray's theory implies that government ought to concern itself with society, leaving the creation and sustenance of community

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[52] Macmurray, *A Challenge to the Churches*, 28.
[53] Macmurray, 'Two Lives in One'.
[54] Macmurray, 'The Community of Mankind'.
[55] Macmurray, 'Explanatory Statement' from series 'Persons and Functions'.
[56] Macmurray, *A Challenge to the Churches*, 15.

to religion. Nonetheless, Macmurray's account of religion is based on the presumption that Britain is essentially Christian. Contemporary politics, however, is grappling with the reality of religious pluralism and the decreased sense of community bound-up with both secularization and multiculturalism. Nevertheless, when Macmurray states that 'The proper relation of religion and politics is the unsolved problem of our civilization',[57] this is a statement with which Nick Wolterstorff agrees.

In a forthcoming paper, Wolterstorff states:

> "political liberalism" is that now-familiar version of political theory, articulating and defending the liberal democratic polity, which holds that it belongs to the role of citizen in such a polity to appeal to "public" or "secular" reason for conducting debates in public on political matters and for making political decisions. John Rawls, Robert Audi, and Charles Lamore, are prominent examples of such theorists.[58]

In other words, it is a commonly held principle of political liberalism that political principles should be underpinned by secular rather than religious reasons. The purpose of this principle is to ensure that reasons cited are accessible by all, through the human capacity for reason, and do not require agreement with a set of religious beliefs. Moreover, according to Rorty, Derrida, Kant and others, if religious reasons were given for political legislation, not all citizens would be able to accept them and violence would result.[59] In short, peace requires that religious resources should not be appealed to in public debate on political issues.

However, Wolterstorff contends that it is absurd to think that all citizens will agree with a piece of legislation because religious reasons have been left out of

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[57] Macmurray, 'Explanatory Statement' from series 'Persons and Functions'.

[58] Nicholas Wolterstorff, 'Why Can't We All Just Get Along With Each Other?', forthcoming paper delivered at 'Religion and Political Liberalism I: Religious Voices in Public Places' colloquium, Institute for Advanced Research in Religion, Ethics and Public Life, School of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds (2– 4 June 2003), typescript, 24 pp at 1. The views expressed in this paper are found also in Audi and Wolterstorff, *Religion in the Public Square*.

[59] Ibid., 8, citing Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope* (London, 1999), 169; and 9 citing John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion Without Religion* (Bloomington, 1997) and James K. A. Smith, 'Determined Violence: Derrida's Structural Religion', *Journal of Religion*, 78:2 (1998), 197–212; and 11, citing Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (New York, 1960), Book Three, Division One, part V, 99–100.

the debate.[60] In addition, he states that 'there is no prospect whatsoever… of all adherents of particular religions refraining from using the resources of their own religion in making political decisions'.[61] Thus, while disputing the theory behind political liberalism, in support of liberal democracy Wolterstorff sets out the principles that he holds are necessary for a liberal democratic polity to maintain peace in a religiously diverse society. His first principle concerns the separation of Church and State. He maintains that Church and State are distinct powers with distinct areas of authority; such as excommunication and incarceration.[62] Secondly, he argues that all citizens should be treated equally, regardless of their religion.[63] Hence the State should not be expected to create or sustain any religion and should accept that not all citizens will agree with legislation, but that legislation will be shaped by the votes of the religious and the secular. According to Wolterstorff, peace is not maintained by appealing to secular reasons in support of legislation, rather, he suggests that 'stability depends on the great majority having reasons based on their own perspectives for accepting the principles [above] of social organization'.[64]

Hence, Wolterstorff argues that religious reasons should enter public debate. While we can agree that religions will appeal to their own resources in consideration of legislation and so it may be more honest to appeal to those reasons than to leave them out, in Macmurrian terms this is another example, albeit a weaker one perhaps, of politics out-stepping its proper limits. It seems that Wolterstorff is assuming that politics, if it includes religious reasons, can sustain peace. In effect, Wolterstorff has submerged the personal life in the functional life; rather than subordinating the latter to the former. Hence, Wolterstorff's account looks like the modern communitarianism that is at odds with Macmurray's account. Thus, it seems that Wolterstorff could offer a more complete picture of human relations by incorporating Macmurray's work. As Kirkpatrick notes, Macmurray 'was trying, in effect… to provide the "something else" or "something more" beyond political principles that is needed to sustain human unity'.[65] Macmurray is certain that democracy cannot exist if it excludes religion, but he also maintains that peace requires more than politics.

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[60] Ibid., 3.
[61] Ibid., 11–12.
[62] Ibid., 18.
[63] Ibid., 20.
[64] Ibid., 24.
[65] Kirkpatrick, *John Macmurray: Community Beyond Political Philosophy*, 3.

Nevertheless, the political liberal theory that Wolterstorff critiques for leaving out religion is predominant in Britain. As we mentioned at the beginning, Blair's brief reference to God in the Parkinson interview was seized on by the media. Similarly, at the start of the war with Iraq there were several media reports (including *The Telegraph*, BBC News and *The Independent*) regarding the silencing of religious rhetoric. Alistair Campbell is widely reported to have intervened in an interview to prevent Blair answering a question about his religious beliefs; according to the reports Campbell stated, "we don't do God".[66] Likewise, at the same time, the media claimed that Blair's aides had intervened to prevent him from ending his address to the nation with the words "God bless you"; Blair was persuaded to say "thank you" instead, on the grounds that the British public would be alienated by and do not want to hear politicians making religious statements.[67]

Moreover, the avoidance of giving religious reasons in public extends beyond politicians and even includes religious leaders. Earlier this year, in an interview with Alan Rusbridger, when questioned about his surprising lack of public pronouncements on moral issues, Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, claimed that society is missing the point by expecting the Church to provide moral leadership.[68] Williams holds that using religion to pass moral judgements is 'part of what he terms being "comic vicar to the nation" '.[69] It is also Williams' view that the public see religion 'as a very alien, very mysterious, rather malign force, which gives people ideas above their station'.[70]

However, there are at least two problems inherent in the attempt to shy away from religious statements. First, as we have mentioned, religious persons have religious reasons, so it is dishonest not to include these. Secondly, as Macmurray points out, the religious or personal life is intimately related to the functional or political life; hence, omitting religious reasons assumes a false and impracticable division of aspects of life into separate spheres.[71]

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[66] Colin Brown, 'Campbell interrupted Blair as he spoke of his faith: "We don't do God"', *The Telegraph*, 4 May 2003.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Alan Rusbridger, "'I am comic vicar to the nation'", *The Guardian*, 21 March 2006.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Moreover, the intentional exclusion of religion would be undemocratic and illiberal.

Appraisal

In breif, if we are to maintain an integrated life, which supports the development of the human person in a community of persons, personal and functional lives need to be integrated in the manner Macmurray suggests. As Kirkpatrick maintains, Macmurray 'is neither a strict liberal nor, despite his emphasis on community, a communitarian'.[72] As we have seen, contemporary communitarians use the term community too broadly and in a sense that confines the individual to her or his social ties. Macmurray, however, insists on personal relations within community, while ensuring that the individual retains the space to challenge society and tradition. He argues that the person 'discovers himself as an individual by contrasting himself, and indeed by wilfully opposing himself to the family *to which he belongs*'.[73] Liberalism, on the other hand, emphasizes freedom of choice over community, whereas Macmurray insists that the use of individual freedom is accompanied by moral responsibility to other persons.

Similarly, if Church and State are interrelated in the way Macmurray describes, we can establish an ethical place for religious reasons in public debate. Macmurray's argument suggests that politicians should have non-religious reasons for legislation, while religious leaders ought to have religious reasons informing moral judgements, because of their roles in society and because of the proper relation of the personal and functional aspects of life. Nonetheless, as we have seen, Macmurray defines religion as community, rather than a particular set of creedal statements; morality, therefore, is bound up with the promotion of community.[74] In addition, in sympathy with Wolterstorff, we have to accept that politicians may have religious reasons, but, in accordance with Macmurray's theory, we should expect religious leaders rather than politicians to concern themselves with the creation and sustenance of community. If Macmurray were able to converse with Blair and Williams then, perhaps he would advise Tony Blair to leave the language of community to Williams, while he would encourage Williams to address the perception of religion in Britain, by focusing on community.

In my opinion, the relationship between secular and religious reasons is like

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[72] Kirkpatrick, *John Macmurray: Community Beyond Political Philosophy*, 121.

[73] Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 91 (original italics) where 'family' represents any society or community.

[74] He states that 'a morally right action is an action which intends community', *Persons in Relation*, 119.

the relationship between religion and morality. While we can have a morality without a religion, religion may operate as an extra element in moral arguments for those who are religious. Similarly, I would argue that politicians must have secular reasons for legislation, but, if they are religious, their religion may operate as an extra dimension in their reasons. In short, I want to claim that religious reasons *supervene* on secular reasons.[75] I do not think that religious reasons should be included alongside secular reasons in the way that Wolterstorff suggests, but I accept that religious persons cannot avoid having them. Politicians must put forward honest, shared non-religious reasons for their legislation, if they seek to convince others. Politicians ought not to cite God as a reason for action then; however, neither do aides need to prevent Prime Ministers from ever mentioning their religious faith, so long as it is understood to supervene on, rather than stand-in for, secular discourse. In my opinion, the notion of supervenience is compatible with Macmurray's account of the role of politics, given that it is meant to be concerned with society rather than community.

Finally, if we agree with Macmurray that community is necessary for human flourishing, but that the State cannot create community, we need to consider how community will be created and sustained. As we have seen, Macmurray expects the Church to fulfil this function, but acknowledges that institutionalized Christianity is failing in this respect. Moreover, Britain is both more secular and more religiously diverse now than it was in Macmurray's era. We have already mentioned the fact that Macmurray presupposes a predominantly Christian as opposed to a thoroughly religiously diverse Britain; in addition, contemporary Britain is the result of a growing secularity with which Macmurray is equally unfamiliar. It is both religious diversity and secularity that challenge Macmurray's notion of community. He states that 'religion is, in intention, inclusive of all members of the society to which it refers, and depends on their active co-operation to constitute it'.[76] While Christian and other religious communities are common in Britain, religious adherence marks exclusive divisions between groups and excludes the non-religious. Moreover, 'active co-operation' in a

[75] In other words, if two persons have different religious reasons, there must be some difference in their secular reasons (even though they may be able to argue for the same public policy). For some religious persons, religious reasons will be viewed as foundational; for others, religious reasons will be viewed as adding an extra element to and increasing the persuasive force of the secular reasons for those who share their religious views. In either case, I am claiming that the religious reasons supervene on the secular reasons.

[76] Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 156.

non-religious community requires alternative opportunities to those provided by religious rituals.[77] We have to consider, then, whether it is possible to promote genuine community in contemporary Britain.

In my opinion, contemporary Britain does provide examples of Macmurrian communities and, moreover, ones that are not tied to a particular religion. Despite Macmurray's assumption in favour of Christian communities, I contend that he would approve of non-religious communities, on the grounds that he defines religion as the celebration of communion rather than the acceptance of a specific set of beliefs. One example of a contemporary non-religious community is the occurrence of and regular meetings working towards the annual celebration of 'unity day' in Leeds.[78] Hyde Park is an area in Leeds encompassing both affluence and poverty; it is culturally and religiously diverse containing several Mosques, Christian Churches and a Hindu temple; it houses a large number of students alongside families, the elderly and young offenders. Local residents set up unity day after the 1995 riots, with the aim of celebrating the 'talent and diversity' of residents in the Leeds 6 postcode area.[79] Unity Day is an annual celebration of all that is positive in the community, organized entirely by volunteers; it sources local bands, artists and entertainers, packing the park with activities for people of all ages. The success of unity day demonstrates that, while the State was failing to establish community in the Leeds 6 area, as we might expect, grass roots action is proving more effective and avoiding the New Labour dilution of community into society. Moreover, unity day has established community across religious boundaries; it is a secular community which contains diverse religious voices, thus fitting Macmurray's definition of community as fellowship and the sharing of a common life, while overcoming the problems of religious diversity with which Macmurray was largely unfamiliar. In addition, the role of the State in providing the conditions necessary for this community to flourish is that of granting licenses for the

[77] With the rise in secularity, it is frequently suggested that football is the new religion. (See BBC News, Stephen Tomkins, 'Matches Made in Heaven', 22 June 2004; Alan Edge, *Faith of Our Fathers: Football as a Religion* (Edinburgh, 1999)). In Macmurrian terms, membership of a football club is potentially inclusive and it clearly provides the ritualistic element that Macmurray's community requires; nevertheless, it is limited as a Macmurrian community, since it presupposes antagonism with others who are not members, as opposed to encouraging their membership.

[78] There are many similar community groups across the UK. Unity Day is a particularly fitting example however, since it has unity as its focus and it is a non-exclusive community (in the sense that all residents and others are welcome participants), unlike an artistic or music-based community.

[79] See www.unityday.org.uk

use of the park, confirming Macmurray's statement that 'the State is *for* the community; the community is *through* the State'.[80]

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[80] Macmurray, 'The Community of Mankind' (original italics).