reference defending the explanatory relevance of religion to American political behavior, at least at the presidential level. Many can learn not only from the book's content, but also the author's ease of explaining complex ideas and synthesizing large amounts of data. The book is truly a contribution to the discipline.

***Faith in Schools? Autonomy, Citizenship, and Religious Education in the Liberal State*. By Ian MacMullen. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007. x + 230 pp. $35.00 cloth**

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Contrary to what is implied by its title, *Faith in Schools?* is not about whether religion should be taught in schools. Rather, it focuses on the question: What are "the legitimate and proper goals of public education policy in liberal democratic states and ... the implications of these goals for arguments about public funding and regulation of religious schools"? (1) The first part of this question, moreover, receives much more attention than does the second part. To answer the above question, the book's author, Ian MacMullen, relies on normative political philosophy. The book, therefore, is not a typical work in public policy — one that relies on empirical research/data. In fact, MacMullen dismisses social science research as useless because it is unable to measure how well different schools achieve their educational goals. (161–162, 206).

The specific political philosophy that determines MacMullen's approach is the "liberal" theory of John Rawls. Although he rejects some of Rawls' positions, MacMullen unreservedly (and uncritically) accepts Rawls' "hallmark" — the idea that public policy should not be based on "conceptions of the good life about which there is reasonable disagreement" (21). He calls this the "reciprocity principle" (22). MacMullen's objective is to come up with an educational goal that does not violate this principle *and* is important enough to warrant being imposed on all schools, including religious schools.

In Part II, the heart of the book, MacMullen argues that the educational goal that meets these two criteria is that of developing students' "ethical

autonomy," by which he means "the combined capacity for and commitment to ongoing rational reflection on all of one's ethical commitments" (67). The key words here are "rational reflection." Being autonomous is not just a matter of being free from the influence of others and deciding for one's self what to do; it requires the use of reason. (168–169) In response to Gerald Dworkin's argument that "ongoing" scrutiny of one's values is incompatible with having meaningful commitments, MacMullen insists that individuals can and *should* have genuine, relatively firm commitments, even when they are subject to ongoing "review and possible revision in the light of new evidence and arguments" (75). The exercise of autonomy does not require persons to renounce the beliefs of their parents. Indeed, it may even strengthen their initial commitments by clarifying and harmonizing them (76–80).

MacMullen, however, claims that making students autonomous is a defensible goal only if it is understood as an *instrumental* good, not an *intrinsic* good. Otherwise, it would violate the reciprocity principle. MacMullen, therefore, insists that ethical autonomy is an important instrumental value. "The essential idea is that rational reflection about one's beliefs and values is an effective way for one to find and live a life that is good for oneself" (96). In short, autonomy is a "noncivic" good that *all* persons should want to have.

What, however, does MacMullen mean by "rational reflection," and how is it beneficial to persons? This question is crucial because he admits that "there is no single ethical truth toward which reason should be leading us"(99). His answer is, first, that being rational means having consistent or coherent beliefs, which helps individual lives to "go better" (102). Second, it means having beliefs that are consistent with empirically verifiable truths, because no one wants to lead a life based on false beliefs (100). Third, persons who know how to rationally scrutinize their own beliefs can rationally scrutinize the arguments of others, especially persons interested in exploiting them. Finally, the more autonomous persons are, the better able they are to function in a modern, rapidly changing liberal democratic society (102–103).

Given the benefits of ethical autonomy, MacMullen contends that it must be developed in all students regardless of the type of school they attend and regardless of how substantial a burden such a policy may impose on religious parents. Religious schools, therefore, must be required to teach it; any school that does not should not be licensed (175–179). However, all private, even religious, schools that do teach

ethical autonomy to their students should be eligible for public funding (180).

In the final part of *Faith in Schools?* MacMullen specifies what schools should be *required* to teach their students so that they will become autonomous persons. In primary schools, the main goal should be to give students a coherent and secure, albeit provisional, sense of identity based on a primary culture, because persons cannot act autonomously if they have no firm set of beliefs from which to act. Primary schools, however, may not use "authoritarian" pedagogy, i.e., they must give reasons for the ethical values they teach and allow their students to question them. The reasons, moreover, cannot take the form of an "immediate appeal to the claims or commands of a [sacred] text or divine entity;" instead, teachers should "invoke religious authority indirectly, reasoning inferentially and interpretively from accepted values and principles" (199). A primary school must also expose its students to "hard cases, conflicts, and tensions" within its religious or cultural tradition (201–202).

In secondary schools, the requirements are even more stringent. Students should be taught to question the identity they were previously given in primary schools. This means that a religious school should be required to:

> manifest a commitment to secular reason-giving . . . balance religious instruction with critical perspectives on the faith, insulate significant parts of the . . . curriculum from the religious ethos of the school, teach about other ethical doctrines in a way that makes . . . [them] viable alternatives to . . . [the] faith, and . . . open the school to teachers and students outside the community of faith (175).

Although *Faith in Schools?* is dense, closely reasoned, and unsuitable for undergraduate courses, persons interested in educational policy and the meaning of autonomy will find it worth reading. It reflects an intimate knowledge of most recent works in political theory on these subjects and is thorough in addressing the issues related thereto. Above all, the book is fair and balanced in its treatment of those issues, which is indicated by the many concessions it makes to opposing arguments. For example, it concedes that parents have rights independent of what is in the best interest of their children, that promoting autonomy threatens the existence of traditional religious and cultural groups and, thus, of the pluralism valued by liberal democrats, that education for autonomy is in tension with civic

education, that some children exposed to beliefs different from those of their parents may "experience great discomfort, no little misery, and perhaps lasting psychological damage" (132), that cultivating autonomy may become indoctrination, and that getting all schools to promote autonomy will be very difficult to do without government's entangling itself in religion and possibly violating religious freedom. MacMullen's response to all these arguments is simply that although true to some degree, they do not outweigh the value of all children's learning to be autonomous.

Despite its thoroughness and fairness, *Faith in Schools?* is ultimately unconvincing because it raises too many unanswered questions, including the following. First, should ethical autonomy be the *only* educational goal of our society and, thus, the only factor determining the state's policy toward religious schools? One can think of several other legitimate goals, both civic and noncivic, some of which religious schools might be especially good at attaining. Second, should Rawlsian liberalism be an unchallenged given? Are individuals more important than the society in which they "live, move, and have their being?" Is it morally required or realistic to limit public policies to those that do not violate the reciprocity principle? Third, does teaching ethical autonomy avoid violating the principle? Is ethical autonomy truly an instrumental good? Although it is not a *specific* moral good, MacMullen argues that it helps persons to live a *good life*. Persons, he says, do not have the right to live immorally or as they please (92–96), but is not living a good, moral life an instrinsic good? Fourth, why should persons ever change their deepest convictions? If, as MacMullen admits, there is no "Archimedean point" or standard by which they can evaluate their commitments and alternatives (80), why should they be exposed to alternatives? Although critical thinking may help persons to clarify and harmonize their *existing* beliefs, can it provide a *reason* for rejecting them?

Finally, there is the overarching question of whether the benefits of teaching ethical autonomy are significant enough to outweigh all the costs of doing so (outlined above) that MacMullen himself mentions. It is not obvious that they are. MacMullen never claims, for example, that being ethically autonomous is *necessary* for persons to live a good life; it is only helpful. Likewise, he never shows that persons must be *taught* ethical autonomy in order to be ethically autonomous. He never considers that autonomy may be as much a function of age, intelligence, general education, cultural factors, etc., as it is of persons' being explicitly taught to be autonomous.

In summary, MacMullen's book is thought-provoking but unconvincing. Even if it were convincing, however, what it proposes in the way of government regulation of religious schools is so radical it has no chance of being adopted in this country — at least not for many, many years.

***Public Pulpits: Methodists and Mainline Churches in the Moral Argument of Public Life*. By Steven M. Tipton. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007. xvi + 556 pp. $35.00 cloth, $35.00 paper**

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How can mainline Protestant churches effectively advocate on issues such as faith-based initiatives, the war in Iraq, and growing economic division in America? Steven Tipton explores this question at length in *Public Pulpits*. In addition, Tipton explores how the diverse mainline churches and their advocacy offices in Washington, D.C., are forced to compete within an American polity increasingly crowded by para-church and non-religious moral advocacy groups that focus on single issues, and in which conservative religious groups and politicians frequently use religious imagery, at times under the guise of speaking for all Christians.

As Tipton explains in Part I of his book, the debate over how mainline churches should respond to political and social issues is not framed strictly as a dichotomy between mainline and conservative religious groups, but within the mainline denominations themselves. Focusing primarily on the United Methodist Church (UMC), the largest and most diverse mainline denomination in the United States, Tipton explores different views of the church's role that are held within the UMC by conservatives, who feel the UMC's General Board of Church and Society and General Conference have irresponsibly debased themselves by ignoring members' beliefs, and liberals, who support an increase in education and enactment of social principles even if it costs membership, arguing that the prophetic and conciliar nature of the church will not always allow the church to follow the majority of its members.