



# Over the Wall: Protecting Religious Expression in the Public Square (Suny Series, Religion and American Public Life)

*Frank Guliuzza III*

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*Discusses the relationship between the secularization of American society and Supreme Court decisions regarding the separation of church and state and offers a judicial alternative.*

*Over the Wall* enters the extensive, and often heated, contemporary debates over both religion and politics and the desired relationship between church and state. Author Frank Guliuzza links the process of "secularization" with the Supreme Court's penchant for "separation," and argues that should policymakers desire to do something about the former, they need to reevaluate the latter.

The book supplements the argument that, increasingly, there is evidence to demonstrate that religious people are not taken seriously in the marketplace of political ideas. That does not mean that religious people, particularly evangelical Christians, are not participating actively in politics. On the contrary, while religious believers are becoming ever more active in politics and political debate, they are taken less and less seriously. Guliuzza claims that this reaction to religious-based political expression is evidence of a concerted effort, though one that comes from multiple perspectives, to produce not simply a secular *nation*, but, rather, a secular *society*.

Guliuzza describes the linkage between those who want to secularize and privatize public space with those who insist that the Constitution's establishment clause requires "separation"--separation of church from state, and separation of religion from that which is not religion. He argues that if one is serious about ending secularization, inasmuch as it impacts upon religious-based political participation, then one must look for a different approach to the establishment clause than that offered by the Supreme Court in *Everson v Board of Education* (1947) and *Lemon v Kurtzman* (1971). He considers the alternative approaches proffered in the literature and by those on the Court, and selects one: "authentic neutrality." Guliuzza asserts that by modifying the Court's approach to the establishment clause, there will be a substantial reduction in the negative consequences of secularization and separation.

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