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### **REACTION #7 AND #8 (Double Length)**

Alexander Schmemmann preaches a spiritual way of living within right religious devotion, and secular knowledge of, and communion with God as worship. Secularism for Schmemmann seems to wrap both agnosticism and spirituality into one. Also, if secularism is the negation of worship, there can be no piety in secularism even if the secularist acknowledges God, the immortality of the soul, and the fundamentally sacred nature of the world and its beings. Piety for Schmemmann comes through liturgical devotion, which is a communal act of power that connects you to something (such as God). Worship, to Schmemmann, is celebrating knowledge of God and thus being more Godlike (p. 144).

I think Schmemmann would say humanism, which has become the fundamentally guiding principle of the United States in a slightly different labeling from the common claim our nation is a Judeo-Christian nation, is a belief of secular impiety. In humanism, the rights of every individual are ordained by law, guided by the highest constitution, and are equally applied to all persons regardless of personally identifiable differences of thought or opinion.

Carl Jung explains in The Undiscovered Self that the great superpowers on Earth have endured because they offer spiritual, social, political, and moral freedom. According to Jung, these four freedoms of thought comprise the core of what society needs for its government to rule effectively. Schmemmann extends Jung's concepts to subsume a spiritual way of life as one may experience in China, where atheism is the state religion and the practice of religion (as well as last I knew, at least officially), Buddhism are outlawed, yet in China one may still practice a spiritually sound way of living with great latitude in political, social, and moral thought and belief (albeit not necessarily in deed).

As written in my last Reaction Paper, one may be ethical and upright without any formal "right religious devotion", as piety is defined, and still be a spiritual being regardless of whether ebbing towards or flowing away from belief in a supernatural God, all the while perfectly maintaining the objectively acceptable humanism around even an on again, off again amorphous or indefinable belief in God<sup>1</sup>.

I am personally quite surprised Schmemmann doesn't even mention humanism in either of the two readings thus far in For the Life of the World. He seems to neatly sidestep the supremacy of secular humanism in enduring stable government by covertly bashing any system of belief that negates worship as he defines it. While society may be moving away from worshipping God

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<sup>1</sup> Concepts under the banner of God include not only a supernatural God, but also having a Higher Power such as is the master in a master-student relationship, or also as a secular acronym for "Good Orderly Direction", or also as is in seeking (to follow) the consensus of a (group) conscience greater than your own.

in the sense of either Schmemmann's loosest definition (celebrating knowledge of God or being more God-like) or tightest definition (communally in a church), it is truly a civil religion where the state and its machinations are worshipped as the highest order of good in its place. In the United States, it is after all the government that enforces secular humanism upon the people, religious and atheist - both those in unison and dissenting in any matter alike - as a means to secure the blessings of liberty for us and our posterity, individually and collectively while maintaining God and personal belief distinctly free from any state compulsion.

In what is the great divisive segregation in the world today, namely under the banner of the Russian Federation and its Allies, the United States spearheading the NATO alliance and its Allies, and China's bulwark in East Asia, these 3 test whether that nation, or any nation on Earth, shall long be divided. It seems if any globalization is to be realized it will be under these "supranational nations" otherwise under tightly segregated and quite opposed supranational military alliances. Schmemmann takes a short view which is overly reliant on religion in deciding what is and is not good in and for a *world* which needs to peacefully accommodate many paths to God, as well as there not being a God, under globalization. In the sense of a burgeoning hegemony one may be easily tempted to view these three as a potentiality of great unification or as the opposite, a polarization in a world cut into thirds by land grabs and multi-faceted but primarily military alliances.