realities cannot be disregarded. Yet recognizing the existence of these counterintuitive developments cannot negate the broader tendencies in the realm of public culture. The dominant impulse at the present time is toward the polarization of a religiously informed public culture into two relatively distinct moral and ideological camps.

4

Competing Moral Visions

The realignment of public culture takes institutional form in a shifting configuration of religious and political associations and organizations. This is the lesson of the preceding chapter. At issue are two *relatively* distinct and competing visions of public life. To identify the predominant and polarizing tendencies as "orthodox" and "progressive" suggests a great deal about the nature of these visions. Knowing something about the specific political agenda pursued by either side reveals even more. But to truly understand the depth of contemporary cultural conflict and its historical significance, it is essential to probe more thoroughly into the perspectives on public life being advocated.

Yet, does it go too far to suggest that both sides of the cultural divide represent something as coherent as "perspective"? Certainly there are no comprehensive philosophical treatises articulating in full measure the nature and profile of these visions. There are no modern manifestos declaring a coherent system of programs and goals. What actually exists in public discussion are, very often, nothing more than jumbled accumulations of pronouncements, accusations, appeals, and partisan analyses. It would be foolish to deny the complexity of the divisions, the subtleties and ambivalent moral commitments in the hearts and minds of ordinary Americans. As I have emphasized from the start, Americans find stances across a wide spectrum of values and perspectives. Despite this complexity, it is possible to discern certain cultural tendencies. That is to say, all of these pronouncements, allegations, complaints, and ap-

peals seem to reveal broad, yet still distinct and opposing cultural impulses. These impulses, I would argue, have come to be rather strong in public discourse mainly because they have been embraced and promoted through the elites and institutions of special interest organizations. As such, they are suggestive of more comprehensive visions of public life—public philosophies whose general contours can be roughly sketched out as ideal types.[1]

COMPETING PHILOSOPHIES OF AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE

As we learned in chapter 2, one of the chief tasks of a public philosophy centers around the problem of national identity—deciding who we as a nation have been, coming to grips with who we are now, and defining what we should aspire to become in the future. Often the mechanism for articulating our public philosophies (and thus the meaning of national identity) is nothing more than a simple narrative—chronicles that begin with an account of the nation's mythic origin and end with a vision of its future. The impact of these stories is critical. When they are intelligible, credible, and compelling to those who hear them, not only do they inspire a sense of cohesion within communities but they provide a ready justification for the nation's conduct in world affairs—for only actions consistent with a nation's self-conception (what it has been and what it aspires to be) will be an appropriate field of national endeavor.

The general public philosophies that have evolved on either side of the cultural divide have been presented many times in recent years and therefore require neither an exhaustive review nor a detailed analysis. But a brief overview of the opposing ideals of national identity and purpose will offer a beginning point for considering the underlying cultural differences that split these new coalitions of conviction.

History As Ideology

The Orthodox Vision

The most effusive interpreters of the mythic origins of the republic on the side of cultural conservatism are the Evangelical Christians. Theirs, of course, is not the only version. Orthodox Catholics and Jews tell the story from a different angle, one that tends to emphasize the

generally religious rather than the specifically Christian nature of the story. Intellectually oriented neo-conservatives stress the generally moral rather than religious nature of the story. Yet all of these versions would have at least a distant resonance with the Evangelical account, particularly in how each of these would understand the republic's founding ideals.

The Evangelical Protestant account of the nation's founding has a very long history, to be sure. Indeed, many of the earliest stories were fashioned by Protestant leaders who lived through the events of those years, some who actually participated in shaping those events—John Witherspoon, John Adams, Timothy Dwight, Patrick Henry. Through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, much the same story was retold, if not by Evangelicals, then by kindred spirits, through song (such as "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," written in 1862), literature (from the fiction of Herman Melville to the poetry of Walt Whitman), political oratory (from Abraham Lincoln to Woodrow Wilson), and sermon (as in the revivalism of Billy Sunday). Present-day Evangelicalism, then, is the contemporary bearer of a story that claims a very long past.

We were introduced to the Evangelical account by Chuck McIlhenny at the opening of this book when he described the Christian heritage that was the context for the nation's founding. It is a start. The larger account varies in detail from Chuck's, but through linking the nation's birth to divine will, the story, as told by some of the most vocal and visible of contemporary Evangelical spokespeople, has a rough coherence. To them, America is, in a word, the embodiment of Providential wisdom. Evangelical journalist Rus Walton put it very simply when he wrote that "the American system is the political expression of Christian ideas."[2] In *The Light and the Glory,* Peter Marshall and David Marvel contended that a divine call upon America can be traced from the very earliest events in the nation's history (including the spiritual calling that Columbus himself received to seek undiscovered lands) to the present, and that this call is still valid today.[3] Another Evangelical author observed that "God's hand was in the founding of this country and the fiber of Christ is in the very fabric of America."[4] According to another, our "civil government is ordained of God [and] . . . America was founded upon Christian principles,"[5] upon the idea that America is "the greatest Christian nation the world has ever known."[6] Arguing more in line with the sensibilities of their new partners in the culture war, Fundamentalist writer Tim LaHaye contends that "it is improper to say that America was founded on Christian principles, for that would unnecessarily exclude the Jewish community. America was founded on biblical principles,

all of which are found in the Old Testament."[7] A similar appeal comes from the Religious Roundtable, which asserts that the United States was "born and built upon basic principles of righteousness" and for this reason "has been blessed and exalted in her short 200 year history like no other nation in history."[8] This assertion garners support from orthodox Catholics. As Mae Duggan puts it, "the founders of our nation, George Washington, James Madison, and even Thomas Jefferson (who did not have any church affiliation), believed that government must be based on God; that governmental structures must have an authority greater than itself, which is God. This is the meaning of our motto, 'In God We Trust.' "

For many, however, the rhetoric goes beyond generalities. Many in the Evangelical camp further contend that the founding documents themselves reflect the hand of divine providence. Argues LaHaye, "The last six commandments of the Decalogue, dealing with man's treatment of his fellowman, and the civil laws of the Old Testament formed the basis for our laws and our Constitution."[9] The Evangelical writer and attorney John Whitehead argues that "the concept of a secular state was nonexistent in 1776 as well as 1787, and no less so in 1791 when the Bill of Rights was adopted." At the framing of the Constitution, Whitehead maintains, the American population "lived under laws that were either written directly from the Scriptures or influenced by them."[10] Whitehead is not alone. "The Founding Fathers," John Eidsmoe writes, "were Newtonians. They believed in absolute, unchanging, God-given laws of science—as well as moral laws. When Jefferson spoke of the 'laws of nature and of nature's God' in the Declaration of Independence, he used language both Christians and Deists would approve. . . . To the Founding Fathers, law was God-given, absolute, unchanging and revealed to man through Scripture, nature and conscience."[11] Still others have gone so far as to call the Constitution and the Bill of Rights "divinely inspired."

The genius of the "American experiment," from this perspective, was the creation of institutions that would guarantee both freedom and justice. Freedom and justice, however, are cast in a particular way within this mythic tradition.

The meaning of freedom, as it is emphasized within the various orthodox communities, is the freedom enjoyed by a society when it does not live under despotism; the freedom of a *society* to govern itself—what philosopher Charles Taylor has called "civic freedom."[12] It is precisely for this reason that the contrast between the United States and its European allies (or the "free" world) and the Soviet Union and the former communist bloc played such a key part in the Evangelical and even conservative Catholic world view. Their definition of freedom made that contrast important.

This definition of freedom also naturally highlights the importance of economic self-determination, as in "free" enterprise. Conservative Catholics have not championed this notion so much in part because of Rome's longstanding concern for the interests of organized labor. *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism,* a book by Catholic scholar Michael Novak, is a notable exception to the rule. But among the more vocal public theologians within the Evangelical tradition, the celebration of capitalism—the freedom to pursue economic gain without government interference—is virtually unqualified.[13] Jerry Falwell repeatedly claimed that "God is in favor of freedom, property, ownership, competition, diligence, work and acquisition. All of this is taught in the Word of God, in both the Old and New Testaments." Therefore "people should have the right to own property, to work hard, to achieve, to earn, and to win."[14] Elsewhere Falwell has written that "the free-enterprise system is clearly outlined in the Book of Proverbs in the Bible. Jesus Christ made it clear that the work ethic was a part of His plan for man. Ownership of property is biblical. Competition in business is biblical."[15] In a similar vein, religious broadcaster Pat Robertson has contended that while "communism and capitalism in their most extreme, secular manifestations are equally doomed to failure, . . . free enterprise is the economic system most nearly meeting humanity's God-given need for freedom. . . . Capitalism satisfies the freedom-loving side of humanity."[16] Such theologies have even been translated into practical, profit-oriented seminars. At the Marriott Hotel, Anaheim, California, in 1981, Evangelist Bill Bright (founder of Campus Crusade for Christ) and Texas billionaire Nelson Bunker Hunt led a three-day financial seminar in which participants were instructed in the biblical foundations of free enterprise and economic success. As one participant enthusiastically stated, "God is an all-time Capitalist, not a Socialist."[17]

Underlying the reverential endorsement of capitalism among these Evangelicals is the conviction that economic and spiritual freedoms go hand in hand, that one is impossible without the other.[18] Some trace the relationship to the Old Testament land laws that linked private property to the freedom from state coercion, especially from taxation.[19] Others see a less complicated connection: the relationship between investing and taking profits is essentially the same as that between giving and

receiving, between sowing and reaping. According to Bill Bright, this is one of the laws that "rule the universe."[20] This dynamic requires economic freedom. As the economist (and professed Evangelical) George Gilder put it: " 'Give and you'll be given unto' is the fundamental practical principle of the Christian life, and when there's no private property you can't give it because you don't own it." For this reason, he concludes, socialism is "inherently hostile to Christianity and capitalism [is] the essential mode of human life that corresponds to religious truth."[21]

Just as a particular understanding of freedom is emphasized in the communities of cultural conservatism, so is a particular definition of "justice." Justice is generally defined in terms of the Judeo-Christian standards of moral righteousness. As R. J. Rushdoony makes clear, justice can only be understood in terms of the law, which in its highest form is "theocentric and is a manifestation of the nature and life of the ontological Trinity."[22] A just society, therefore, is a morally conscientious and lawful society. When its people abide by these standards it is also an ordered society. The Old Testament is often quoted in this regard: "Righteousness exalts a nation," "By justice a king gives a country stability," "When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan," "Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand all things," and so on. In this view, the moral fiber of American life is built upon standards of biblical morality. As a pamphlet from Christian Voice proclaimed, "The mandate from our Heavenly Father is to make sure government is faithfully meting out justice and punishing what is wrong and rewarding what is right."[23] Freedom, justice, and America's biblical culture are seen as intimately linked. Summarizes LaHaye, "In truth, what has granted more freedom for the longest period of time . . . to the largest number of people, while at the same time producing the greatest wealth for the most people, can be traced to . . . our Bible-based form of government and our unique Bible-based educational system."[24]

This vision of America's past contains an implicit vision of America's destiny. In language reminiscent of nineteenth-century exceptionalism, a pamphlet published by Students for America announces that "America has a unique mission to extend the boundaries of liberty and righteousness."[25] But from the conservative Evangelical perspective, the only hope for achieving this end is for the United States to stay the course. If change is necessary, it should only be undertaken to more perfectly fulfill the ideals established at the nation's founding. So warns Pat Robertson: "Either we will return to the moral integrity and original dreams of the

founders of this nation . . . or we will give ourselves over more and more to hedonism, to all forms of destructive anti-social behavior, to political apathy, and ultimately to the forces of anarchy and disintegration that have throughout history gripped great empires and nations in their tragic and declining years."[26] Along the same lines, evangelist Jimmy Swaggart has asserted, "We believe the salvation of the United States of America is still the old-fashioned principles laid down in the Word of Almighty God."[27] And from Jerry Falwell comes the argument that "only by godly leadership can America be put back on a divine course."[28]

The Progressivist Vision

Those on the progressive side of the cultural divide rarely, if ever, attribute America's origins to the actions of a Supreme Being. The National Education Association, for example, insists that "when the Founding Fathers drafted the Constitution with its Bill of Rights, they explicitly designed it to guarantee a secular, humanistic state."[29] Some professional historians, as Garry Wills points out, have added to this myth in the name of objective scholarship. He notes that Henry Steele Commager's *The American Mind,* for example, contends that the American mind has been from the outset pragmatic, optimistic, and secular, with little regard for the forces of religious or artistic irrationalism. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., also argued that secularity was the dominant trait of American society. "The American mind," he says, "is by nature and tradition skeptical, irreverent, pluralistic and relativistic"; elsewhere he says, "Relativism is the American way."[30] The premise of the progressivist account, then, is a rejection of the particularistic loyalties of the orthodox in favor of what one secular tract called "eternal verities"—universal ethical principles in part derived from the nation's religious and humanist traditions. A placard seen at an anti–Moral Majority demonstration in St. Paul, Minnesota, read, "God loves the world—not just America." As another put it, "America is not a Christian nation but one in which many Christians happen to live. America and every nation on earth is called by God to seek justice and serve the common good of humanity, not as special privilege, however, but as special responsibility."[31]

Accordingly, the founding documents of the republic take on a different understanding from that maintained by cultural conservatives. The Constitution and the Bill of Rights, for example, are not seen as reflecting absolutes either given by God or rooted in nature; instead the founders gave us a "living Constitution," one that cannot be straightjack-

eted, forever attached to the culture of an agrarian, preindustrialized society, but one that grows and changes with a changing society. Law in a democratic society is one of the highest expressions of human rationality and must evolve as society evolves and matures. The ideals that it serves are also the ideals of freedom and justice.

In this progressivist vision, freedom and justice are understood in fundamentally different ways than they are on the orthodox side of the cultural divide. Here freedom is defined largely in terms of the social and political rights of individuals. This is what Charles Taylor has called "liberal" freedom (as opposed to "civic" freedom, mentioned earlier). It is, Taylor says, "freedom in the 'negative' sense, a condition in which the individual is granted immunity from interference by others in his life, either by state or church or by other individuals."[32] This perspective was reflected in the views of all the progressivists we met in the prologue: Richmond Young's concern with the rights of homosexuals, Bea Blair's concern for "reproductive rights" and the rights of women, and Harriet Woods's concern for the freedom of inquiry in public schools. The logic is unambiguous. As one religiously based women's rights newsletter stated simply, "Being oppressed is the absence of choice."[33] It is in this light that one can understand the high tribute given to "pluralism" and "diversity." As Norman Lear of People for the American Way argued, "First and foremost among our shared values is a celebration of diversity and respect for the beliefs of others."[34]

It is not surprising that the founding myths advanced in progressivist circles tend to focus on the struggle of the founders to establish and preserve "pluralism and diversity." The names of Roger Williams, George Washington, John Adams, Tom Paine, James Madison, and Frederick Douglass are commonly invoked as champions of these principles. A People for the American Way publication maintained, "Throughout our history, American men and women have fought hard to make this country a better place. They fought for fair representation. Open debate. A healthy respect for diverse public opinion. . . . [Thus,] America is the freest . . . nation on earth. A legacy left to us by the Founders of our country."[35] A pamphlet put out by the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights justified its position by stating that "fortunately, the framers of this country's Bill of Rights understood and cherished diversity."[36]

Justice, on the other hand, tends to be understood by progressivists in terms of equality and the end of oppression in the social world. This is the theme of "fair play" that Bea Blair emphasized in her story.

Whether it is the case for women, blacks, Hispanics and other racial minorities, homosexuals and lesbians, refugees, Palestinians, the black majority in South Africa, or the poor and laboring classes, justice means greater equity and thus the elimination of repressive relationships. Political rights are a part of the equation, but almost invariably economics becomes perhaps the central part of the equation. It is in this light that, for example, the progressive journal *Christianity and Crisis* described the "minimum wage" as a "minimum justice."[37] The Religious Network for Equality for Women identified support for the Equal Rights Amendment, a comprehensive jobs program, affirmative action, an earning-sharing provision within Social Security, and so on, with "God's call for justice."[38] *Sojourners* magazine called its commitment to speak on behalf of the poor and oppressed a "commitment to justice," and Clergy and Laity Concerned described their opposition to "workfare, plant closures, family farm loss, etc." and their "stand in solidarity with the poor" as efforts to promote justice.[39] Peace with Justice organizers in 1988 identified "people of color, women, children, the hungry, the poor, small farmers," and the like as "victims of injustice."[40]

Those who hold the progressivist vision generally maintain that America's enormous wealth and power in the world have inevitably created equally huge inequities. The responsibility of the American people and their government is equally great. "Social justice," they maintain, "may no longer be a fashionable concept. But, justice and empathy are not fads. They are a matter of faith. And, a matter of action." The calling, then, becomes clear: as stated in a National Impact pamphlet, the goal is "to move our government toward compassionate and sensible public policies."[41] Such sensibilities are shared among virtually all activists on this side of the cultural divide.

Clearly, then, within each of these opposing public philosophies, the words "freedom and justice" carry enormous symbolic weight. Both sides explicitly link these words and their broader vision of the public order to either scriptural referents or other universal ethical standards. But the meanings of the terms on either side of the divide are almost precisely inverted. Where *cultural conservatives* tend to *define freedom economically* (as individual economic initiative) and *justice socially* (as righteous living), *progressives* tend to *define freedom socially* (as individual rights) and *justice economically* (as equity). These differences naturally account for the different meanings each side imputes to the founders and their struggle to build a republic. Both biblical *and* Enlightenment themes are present

the historical record. Yet in public discourse, each theme is accentuated by opposing sides at the expense of the other. However true or false the account may be, history tends to be reduced to ideology, a means through which the social and political interests of each side of the cultural divide are legitimated.

PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY AND NATIONAL PRIORITY

Anything but abstract and inconsequential, both of these rival philosophies of public life translate into practical standards for evaluating America's identity and priorities in the global order. This became amply apparent in the Religion and Power Survey conducted by the Opinion Research Corporation in 1987.[42] The survey found that Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish leaders on both ends of the new cultural axis generally agreed that America bore tremendous responsibility in world affairs. Virtually all were prone to agree that the United States is not "pretty much like other countries" but "has a special role to play in the world today."[43] Leaders of all faiths were strongly disposed to affirm that "the United States should aspire to remain a world power" and not "a neutral country like Switzerland or Sweden."[44] But opposing factions sharply disagreed as to how the United States should actually carry out that responsibility. When asked, "How much confidence do you have in the ability of the United States to deal wisely with present world problems?" progressives in all three faiths were at least twice as likely as their more orthodox counterparts to say "not very much" or "none at all."[45]

The same kind of division was exhibited among the orthodox and progressives when asked to make moral assessments of America's place in the world order. The overwhelming majority of the orthodox in Protestant (78 percent), Catholic (73 percent), and Jewish (92 percent) leadership circles said, for example, that the United States was, in general, "a force for good in the world." By contrast, the majority of the progressives in Protestantism and Catholicism (51 percent and 56 percent, respectively) said that the United States was either "neutral" or "a force for ill."[46] The contrast was even more stark when respondents were asked to assess how America treats people in the Third World. Progressives, particularly Protestants (71 percent) and Catholics (87 percent), were much more likely to agree that America "treats people in the Third World unfairly." The majority of the orthodox in each tradition claimed just the opposite.[47]

Opposing perspectives of America's moral status in world affairs became apparent when respondents were asked to compare the United States and the Soviet Union. A plurality of all religious leaders characterized the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union as a struggle in power politics, as opposed to a moral struggle, yet the more orthodox Catholics and Protestants were three times more likely (and Orthodox Jews over twice as likely) to say that it was a moral struggle.[48] Ideological disparities between orthodox and progressive were even more dramatic, however, when asked which was the greater problem in the world today: repressive regimes aligned with the United States or Soviet expansion? The majority of progressives within Protestantism (61 percent), Catholicism (71 percent), and Judaism (57 percent) claimed that it was the repressive regimes aligned with the United States; the majority of the orthodox in these three faiths (Protestants—84 percent, Catholics—64 percent, and Jews—87 percent) identified Soviet expansion as the greater problem.

The results of a survey of the political opinion of Christian theologians conducted in 1982 reveal similar divisions in perspectives on domestic spending.[49] Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of the progressives compared to under one-fifth (19 percent) of the orthodox claimed that the government was spending too little on welfare. Eighty percent of the progressives said that the government was spending too little on national health compared to just 52 percent of the Evangelicals. Likewise, nearly nine out of ten (89 percent) of the progressives agree that the government was spending too little on protecting the environment; just half (50 percent) of the orthodox Protestants felt the same way. Almost nine out of ten (87 percent) of the progressives complained that the government spent too little money on urban problems compared to 56 percent of the orthodox. And roughly six out of every ten of the progressives (59 percent) claimed that too little was spent on foreign aid; just one out of every four (24 percent) of the orthodox agreed.

MORAL AUTHORITY AND THE REALIGNMENT OF PUBLIC CULTURE

My main point thus far is to demonstrate that the opinions of elites reflect different and, in many cases, opposing visions of national identity and public life. They differ, then, in their public philosophies.

Yet even this does not quite capture what is fundamentally at issue

The basic distinction I have insisted on bears repeating. To explain the nature of the emerging cultural realignment solely in terms of the differences in political philosophy as reflected in public opinion is to risk arguing that the primary contenders in the cultural conflict are really nothing more than political "liberals" and political "conservatives." The inadequacy of these terms which I suggested earlier, is immediately apparent. To conceptualize the problem as a political squabble, as some have proposed, is to suggest that the new and opposing alliances in American public life operate on the *same* plane of moral discussion.[50] Such a view would imply that each side shares the same ideals of moral community and national life, but that they simply envision different strategies for getting there. As we have observed, the orthodox tend to be conservative and the progressive tend to be liberal but those tendencies, I contend, are merely the *political manifestations of still deeper commitments.* In reality orthodox and progressive alliances do not operate on the same plane of moral discourse.

Others would argue that differences in political philosphy are reducible to social rank. Those holding orthodox commitments can be found among the disenfranchised lower middle class, the old petite bourgeoisie, who have incurred losses in power and privilege through the political and economic changes of the past decades. By contrast, this theory holds that progressivist commitments can be found among the rising "new class" of knowledge workers, the "new bourgeoisie," who have turned their control over cultural capital to social and political advantage. In its more simplified formulation, public philosophy is merely a reflection of class interests. But what this perspective fails to see is that the "new class" of knowledge workers is divided within itself. Traditional family proponent James Dobson of Focus on the Family, for example, is every bit as much a knowledge worker or symbol specialist—and therefore a member of the new class—as is Planned Parenthood's Faye Wattleton.

Political formulations of the debate, then, seem inadequate. Though there are clearly political manifestations of this dispute, the dispute is more than political. Likewise, while each side betrays certain social characteristics, the cultural controversy is much more than a reflection of competing class interests. There is, then, a more vital cultural dynamic involved in generating this cultural realignment. In this sense, the conflict is prepolitical and it precedes class. What ultimately explains the realignment in America's public culture are *allegiances to different formulations and sources of moral authority.*

Sources of Moral Authority

To speak of moral authority is to speak of the fundamental assumptions that guide our perceptions of the world. These assumptions provide answers to questions about the nature of reality—what is real and what isn't. For example, is there a spiritual as well as a physical and material realm of existence? Does God exist? If so, what is God's nature? Is God an active agent in human affairs or a distant ideal of human aspiration? These are also the assumptions that define the foundations of knowledge—how we know what we know. Upon what do we ground our knowledge of the world, our understanding of truth, and our conception of moral and ethical behavior? Does our knowledge derive from divine revelation, through the analysis of empirical evidence, or through personal and subjective experience? These assumptions act as a lens that highlights certain aspects of experience as important or unimportant, relevant or irrelevant, good or bad, and right or wrong. These generally unspoken assumptions are the basic standards by which we make moral judgments and decisions.

The point needs to be made that all individuals ground their views of the world within some conception of moral authority. Not only those who are religious in a traditional sense, but also those who claim to have no religious faith at all base their views of the world in unprovable assumptions about "being" and "knowledge." To imagine otherwise would be philosophically naive. It is precisely for this reason that the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights and the Religious Coalition for Equality for Women include in their fellowship such secularist organizations as the American Humanist Association and the Ethical Culture Society, and speak of them literally as "communities of faith."[51] Even average, nonactivist secularists—ordinary people who maintain no religious belief, who worship no deity—live by unspoken assumptions about their world; they too are people of particular, even if implicit, faith commitments.

The view that perhaps comes closest to the argument offered here has been proposed by Richard Merleman. He has speculated that the strains in American culture are those that exist between the "tight-bounded" and "loose-bounded" moral communities within our society.[52] Moral obligation within tight-bounded communities tends to be fixed and rigid, viewed by its members as a "given" of social life. In opposition are loose-bounded communities for whom moral commitment tends to be voluntary, contingent, and fluid—where the liberated individual, not

the social group, becomes the final arbiter of moral judgment. Merleman's perspective supports the argument made here; namely, that what finally *unites* the orthodox and the progressive *across* tradition and *divides* the orthodox and progressive *within* tradition are different formulations of moral authority. Here again, in social reality there is complexity and diversity. Even so, certain tendencies and commonalities exist on each side of the cultural divide that can be described in ideal-typical terms. What is the substance of each?

The Orthodox Appeal to Authority

Within communities that hold orthodox views, moral authority arises from a common commitment to transcendence, by which I mean a dynamic reality that is independent of, prior to, and more powerful than human experience. God and the realm God inhabits, for the orthodox, is indeed super- and supranatural. Of course transcendence has a different content and meaning in each tradition. In each tradition, moreover, transcendence communicates its authority through different media: for example, through the spiritual prerogatives of the inerrant Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments; through Torah and the community that upholds it; through the pope and the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church; through the Book of Mormon; and, small though the Unification Church may be, through Reverend Sun Myung Moon and the Divine Principle. Within each faith, the commitment to these specific media of moral authority is so forceful and unwavering that believers in each would consider sources other than their own as heretical.

Yet despite these differences, there are formal attributes to their faith that are held in common with the others. As argued earlier, each maintains a paramount commitment to an external, definable, and transcendent source of authority. For the believers in each tradition, moral and spiritual truths have a supernatural origin beyond and yet barely graspable by human experience. Although the media through which transcendence speaks to people varies (as noted earlier), they all believe that these truths are divinely "revealed" in these written texts and not somehow discovered through human endeavor or subjective experience apart from these texts. This implies that they also share a common method of interpreting their world and their experience. In this case transcendent authority is not just symbolic, but propositional; it is not just representational, but it has objective and concrete agency in human affairs. God, they would say, is real and makes Himself tangibly, directly, and even propositionally known in the everyday experience of individuals and communities. From this authority derives a measure of value, purpose, goodness, and identity that is consistent, definable, and even absolute. In matters of moral judgment, the unequivocal appeal of orthodoxy is to these uncompromisable standards. It is, then, an authority that is universally valid—adequate for every circumstance and context. It is an authority that is sufficient for all time.

Even though Rabbi Yehuda Levin is an Orthodox Jew and even though Orthodox Judaism is so sparsely represented in America, his views of moral truth speak in a general way for others on the orthodox side of the cultural divide—Evangelical Protestants and conservative Catholics. In this, his observations illustrate the argument well. Says Yehuda, "Being Jewish means a total surrender of my intellect to God. In other words, God tells me what's right and what's wrong. I may attempt in a limited capacity to try to understand that, but I have to start off from the point that I am surrendering my personal intellect to God. If something doesn't make sense to me, that has no bearing on the reality of it or my obligation to respond to it. God said I should observe the Sabbath, for example, so I observe the Sabbath. God said, 'Thou shalt not steal' and so I don't steal—not because 'crime doesn't pay,' but because God said not to steal. [Likewise with abortion] I do not need any proof that [the fetus] is human. In fact, if somebody somehow would bring proof positive—scientific evidence—tomorrow that the fetus is just a glob of gelatin or something like that, it would not in one iota change my view on abortion." Levin's general orientation is precisely what Harriet Woods meant when she said that "they [Evangelicals, conservative Catholics like Mae Duggan, and Orthodox Jews like Yehuda Levin] cannot hold people by rational argument or by pragmatic results."

As noted in chapter 1, there are secularists on the orthodox side of the new cultural divide. The philosopher Sidney Hook, a celebrated atheist and conservative, and the political philosopher Leo Strauss (and his school) both come to mind. One may also find in the orthodox ranks many secular neoconservative intellectuals for whom religiously grounded arguments hold aesthetic or even functional appeal, but are not personally or inwardly compelling. One should not gloss over the sometimes deep philosophical disagreements between the religiously orthodox and such secularists, for whom the public pronouncements of Protestant Fundamentalists and of some orthodox Catholics will often seem excessive, even silly. More often than not, however, the crankier

voices of religious orthodoxy are tolerated in silence, if only because these secularists recognize them to be fellow travelers working toward a common mission.

What forges their bond with the religiously orthodox is that they too are committed to a transcendent foundation for moral judgment. Theirs, however, tends to be a classic form of humanism, in which a high view of nature, natural law, or the social order itself acts as a functional equivalent to an objective and transcendent authority. What makes their view of nature or the social order "high" is a belief that nature is intrinsically rational, that it reflects a logical order that human beings are able to discern. As such, while truth and the good are subject to the change that affects nature itself, they are relatively durable over time and across societies.

Based upon this general understanding of moral authority are certain non-negotiable moral "truths." Among the most relevant for the present purposes are that the world, and all of the life within it, was created by God, and that human life begins at conception and, from that point on, it is sacred. Another "truth" is that the human species is differentiated into male and female not only according to genitalia, but also according to role, psyche, and spiritual calling. Related to this idea is the belief that the natural and divinely mandated sexual relationship among humans is between male and female and this relationship is legitimate only under one social arrangement, marriage between one male and one female. Homosexuality, therefore, is a perversion of the natural or created order. Building on this is the conviction that the nuclear family is the natural form of family structure and should remain inviolable from outside (state) interference. And this idea encompasses the belief in the inviolable rights of parents—their right to raise their children into their own religious and moral tradition, the implication being that this role should be encouraged and not hindered by a secular, liberal educational establishment.

The Progressivist Appeal to Authority

The progressivist vision of moral authority poses a sharp contrast. For progressivists, moral authority is based, at least in part, in the resymbolization of historic faiths and philosophical traditions. Of course, all religious communities (even the orthodox) resymbolize their traditions, but the orthodox tend to do it unwittingly and as a defensive measure when they feel threatened.[53] In the progressivist alliance, however, resymbolization is accomplished more or less consciously, deliberately, and in a way that is compatible with the spirit of historical change. Consider first the appeal to authority advocated by those who profess a liberal religious faith.

The premise of this resymbolization is usually the intentional rejection of the form and content of orthodoxy. Such a rejection varies in degree and intensity, as one might imagine, but all progressivists maintain to a certain degree that the language and programmatic thrust of traditional faith—at least as appropriated by their orthodox counterparts—is no longer relevant for modern times. Traditional faith must be reworked to conform to new circumstances and conditions; it must respond to new challenges and needs. What compels this rejection of orthodoxy is the conviction that moral and spiritual truth is not a static and unchanging collection of scriptural facts and theological propositions, but a growing and incremental reality. Faith should continually develop, in part because the object of faith (or at least our understanding of it) is continually developing.

There is, therefore, no objective and final revelation directly from God, and Scripture (of whatever form) is not revelation but only, and at best, a *witness* to revelation. The moral and spiritual truths of religious faith can only come to human beings indirectly and they can only be understood and expressed in human (which is to say, historical and institutional) terms. Thus, moral and spiritual truth can only be conditional and relative. This orientation is well illustrated by the views of both Richmond Young and Bea Blair. Richmond chose to embrace Catholicism in part because he believed that the Catholic Church was not bound by the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture. What is more, the Magisterium in his view may be an agent of divine truth but in the end is a human and therefore fallible institution. A similar attitude about the humanity of Scripture is taken by Bea Blair. She "of course" is not a "literalist." Scripture, she says, "must be interpreted," not taken at face value. In a negative way this view is acknowledged by the progressivists' adversaries as well. Yehuda Levin's complaint about liberal and secular Jews like Harriet Woods is that "they do not consider themselves bound by the sources. They do not give any legitimacy to the Talmud, they are not bound by the code of Jewish law or the Halakah or even bound to what Maimonides, the greatest formulator of classical Judaism, says or anything else for that matter. They make up the rules as they play the game. I don't think they can deny this." This is also the criticism that Chuck McIlhenny directed at the liberal churchmen and women who

supported the domestic partners proposal in San Francisco. "They reject what the Bible says about itself. They say it is not inspired, that it's just a human book like anything else."

For this reason the legacy of faith for progressivists becomes valuable not as the literal account of historic personalities and events in relation to God, but primarily (and perhaps only) as a narrative that points to ethical principles that can be applied to contemporary human experience. In the case of scriptural hermeneutics, what is important in the scriptural accounts of God's dealings with His people is not whether they literally occurred but what they symbolize about human relationships today.

To say that the progressivist wings of Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism have largely rejected the absolute authority of their traditions is not, therefore, to suggest that their traditions have become in any way irrelevant or socially impotent. The traditions still provide a powerful sense of continuity with the past, inform a style of communal worship and interpersonal solidarity, and guide their communities in the search for universal ethical principles—principles that have as their ultimate end the fulfillment of human needs and aspirations.

We can see a deep affinity between the cultural hermeneutics of liberal religious belief (Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish) and of civic (or areligious) humanism. Both activist humanists (as found in such groups as the American Humanist Association, Ethical Culture, and the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism) and the larger, nonactivist, secularist public reject the validity of any traditional religious symbols and rituals. They also tend to be particularly hostile toward orthodox religious belief.[54] But there are important positive affinities between religious and secular progressives as well. Like their counterparts during the classical era, the Italian Renaissance, and the French Enlightenment, the contemporary expressions of areligious humanism also maintain the fundamental conviction that moral truth is perpetually unfolding; that moral truth is a human construction and, therefore, is both conditional and relative; and that moral truths should reflect ethical principles that have the human good as their highest end.

In sum, within the broader progressivist alliance (both religious and secular), moral authority emerges primarily if not exclusively within "this-worldly" considerations. The inner-worldly sources of moral authority may vary in at least two ways. First, the progressive conception can be based in what could be called "self-grounded rational discourse." In intellectual terms, this is the tradition of "Enlightenment naturalism"—of Thomas Hobbes, the Enlightenment encyclopedists, Baron D'Holbach, John Dewey, Willard van Orman Quine, Wilfrid Sellars, and others.[55] Here, in principle, moral positions and influence are justified solely on the grounds of evidence about the human condition and the coherence and consistency of the arguments adduced. Not only are the nature of reality and the foundations of knowledge established by the adequacy of empirical proofs uncovered and the quality and coherence of the logic applied, but in this frame of reference, autonomous rationality and the empirical method become the decisive criteria for evaluating the credibility and usefulness of all moral claims as well. In the more extreme scientistic formulations, it is argued that there is no reality except that which science has shown to exist; no truth except that which is established by the scientific method. Such claims are common in debates (often in the context of a lawsuit) over medical policy, educational policy, or other forms of public policy, where the ethics of a particular action—say in the area of genetic therapy, or in the value of educational curricula, or in the promotion of child-care regulations—depend upon scientific proof that people are helped, or at least not hurt, by that course of action. If expert knowledge—from, say, educational or family psychologists—can show that a course of action has no untoward psychological effects on people, then that action is morally permissible.

On a second and very different plane of moral reasoning, the progressivist conception of moral authority may be based in personal experience. This is probably the dominant basis of moral reasoning on this side of the cultural divide. In intellectual terms, this is the tradition of Enlightenment subjectivism—of Kant, Existentialism, and the various streams of Heideggerian hermeneutical philosophy such as found in Wittgenstein and Richard Rorty. In this case, experience is ordered and moral judgments are made according to a logic rooted in subjective intuition and understanding. (The premise here is that by virtue of our symbolic activity, we human beings are responsible for the way the world is.) The moral logic of this position, as it translates into popular culture, has been described in numerous ways by social scientists in recent years, perhaps most commonly as liberal or expressive individualism. This concept implies a moral pragmatism centered around the individual's perception of his or her own emotional needs or psychological disposition. In this situation, reason linked with a keen awareness of subjective orientation provides the ultimate crucible for determining what is right and

ultimately what is good and evil. The cliché that beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder is expanded and elevated to the status of a fundamental moral principle—that what people view as ultimately true, morally good, worthwhile, artistically pleasing, sensually pleasurable, and so on, resides wholly in the private whim or personal perspective of individuals. Private perspectives are inextricably bound to the individual's unique collection of experiences. In some ways, biography is the main foundation of truth.

As with orthodoxy, a list, if you will, of specific precepts tends to emanate from the progressivist conceptions of moral authority. Among the most relevant here are the assumptions that personhood begins at or close to the moment of birth, at least until science can prove otherwise. Likewise, until science can prove otherwise, male and female are differentiated solely by biology; other differences are probably human constructions imposed through socialization and reinforced in human relationships by powerful and sometimes oppressive institutions. So too, human sexuality is based in biological need. The forms in which those needs are met are historically and culturally variable and completely legitimate as long as those forms reflect a positive and caring relationship. Homosexuality, then, does not represent an absolute and fundamental perversion of nature but simply one way in which nature can evolve and be expressed. As one gay activist put it, we should "appropriate our sexuality not as something biologically necessitated, or as socially coerced, but as a freely chosen way of expressing our authentic humanness in relation to the special others with whom we wish to share our lives."[56] In like fashion, marriage and family structures are historically and culturally varied. Their form, by and large, depends upon need and circumstance.[57]

In sum, the orthodox communities order themselves, live by, and build upon the substance of a shared commitment to transcendent truths and the moral traditions that uphold them. The very identity of these communities is "bound tightly" around that tradition.[58] Moral authority on the progressivist side of the cultural divide tends not to be burdened by the weight of either "natural law," religious prerogative, or traditional community authority. Rather, as Merleman put it, it is a "loose-bounded" authority, detached from the cultural moorings of traditional group membership. As such it carries few, if any, of the burdens of the past. Memory does not inhibit change: authority is distinctly forward-looking, open-ended, and malleable. Thus, this is a form of moral authority that is uniquely shaped by and oriented toward legitimating the prevailing *zeitgeist* or spirit of the age.

Moral Authority and Political Expedience

The orthodox and progressivist conceptions of moral authority and the range of specific assumptions that follow from them are obviously more complex than the rough sketches presented here. Nonetheless, what is important is that they bear on political philosophy and practice in direct ways. The most obvious way is with regard to controversial issues of the day: abortion, the ERA, gay rights, educational policy, and the like. The assumptions and the interests of each alliance preclude or endorse the specific proposals from the outset. Moral logic reflects those interests and assumptions. Thus, for example, abortion is murder and must be stopped if human life is defined as beginning at conception. Legalized abortion is morally acceptable and therefore a viable public policy if life is defined as beginning with the first breath at birth or perhaps the third or even second trimester of pregnancy. By a similar logic, homosexuality is a perversion if the only legitimate sexuality is between a man and a woman. Homosexuality between consenting adults is acceptable and sodomy laws anachronistic if we assume that there are many justifiable ways of satisfying human biological needs. Equalizing the role of women will be undesirable if it appears to threaten the "traditional" patriarchal family structure. If the "bourgeois family" is regarded as just one possible familial arrangement (and one that tends in practice to be oppressive), legislation on behalf of the rights of women will seem both fitting and desirable. Similarly direct correspondences between assumptions and policy positions can be found vis-à-vis the day-care debate, the eugenics controversy, euthanasia, the many issues that make up the disputes over religion and public education, and a host of other issues.

But the relationship between moral authority and political expedience goes beyond the predictable responses to policy issues. It is often asked how, for example, a fundamentalist view leads to opposition to America's relinquishing control over the Panama Canal, or how being a liberal Catholic leads one to support the proposition of "comparable worth." On the face of it, having certain religious commitments does not seem to have anything at all in common with certain specific political commitments. Yet seemingly strange patterns of alliance constantly surface in political life. Perhaps the best answer to questions like these is

simply to say that there is a loose affinity between religious orientation and political opinions. Specifically, there seems to be a loose affinity or "isomorphism" between religious conservatism and political preservationism on the one hand, and between religious and even secular liberalism and political reformism (if not radicalism) on the other.[59] These general affinities lead people of particular cultural orientations to not-so-predictable political commitments. This might help explain why, for example, the religiously orthodox tend to be more disposed toward a strong military and an aggressive foreign policy. The religious self-identity of the orthodox groups draws much from America's role as a world power (for example, by checking "godless" communist expansion, by defending Israel, and so on). Religious interests are at least indirectly tied to America's geopolitical interests. This isomorphism also partially explains the opposing relationships between religion and capitalism, particularly in Protestantism: the religious individualism of Evangelical Protestantism and economic individualism mirror each other in much the same way as religious communalism (as expressed in the ethical tradition of the social gospel) and economic collectivism. It might also explain why *both* orthodox and progressivist camps (correctly) accuse each other of supporting policies that engender the intrusion of the state into private life. The enactment of law that endorses a shifting cultural climate will be perceived as an intrusion by those who resist the present cultural changes; the reversal of these laws or the attempt to prohibit their enactment will be perceived as an intrusion by those who approve of these changes and whose interests are served by them.

IN SEPARATE WORLDS

The central dynamic of the cultural realignment is not merely that different public philosophies create diverse public opinions. These alliances, rather, reflect the *institutionalization and politicization of two fundamentally different cultural systems.* Each side operates from within its own constellation of values, interests, and assumptions. At the center of each are two distinct conceptions of moral authority—two different ways of apprehending reality, of ordering experience, of making moral judgments. Each side of the cultural divide, then, speaks with a different moral vocabulary. Each side operates out of a different mode of debate and persuasion. Each side represents the tendencies of a separate and competing moral galaxy. They are, indeed, "worlds apart."

The Interminable Character of Moral Debate

As a consequence of this mutual moral estrangement, concessions on many policy matters become a virtual impossibility. The abortion debate exemplifies this most poignantly, particularly in the voices of those who care most passionately about the outcome. No one on the pro-life side of this controversy doubts that "God's gift of life begins at conception." How do we know this? "The Bible clearly states that life begins at conception."[60] Thus, the Old and New Testament texts are copiously cited. But what is more, modern science also demonstrates that there is life in the womb. After all, "The unborn child has a beating heart at 24 days, brain waves and unique fingerprints at 43 days, a complete skeleton and reflexes at 6 weeks," and so on. Abortion, therefore, could never be anything else than the "killing of innocent life." For this reason, "the abortion of the 22 million fetuses between 1973 and 1988" is nothing short of "mass genocide." The moral choice, then, is clear: one is, as a Methodists for Life brochure put it, "either for life or against life; for Jesus or against Jesus."[61]

The moral logic is fundamentally different on the pro-choice side of the controversy. Arguments also grounded in theological and scientific insight show that there is "an important distinction between potential life and actual life" and that fetuses "are not of equal moral value with actual persons."[62] After all, "The biblical characterization of human being is that of a complex, many-sided creature with the god-like ability and responsibility to make choices. The fetus hardly meets those characteristics."[63] On this side too, as the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights makes clear, abortion is a religious issue. Not only do different faith traditions hold different theological and philosophical beliefs about "personhood," they also hold different ideas about when abortion is morally justified. The bottom line, according to the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights and other progressivist groups, is simply this: "If abortion is a religious issue, and religious theologies differ, and each denomination counsels its members according to its own theology, wouldn't a law prohibiting abortion violate religious liberty? Exactly. . . . The issue of abortion is a crucial test of religious liberty—one of the cornerstones of democracy."[64]

The reality of politics and public policy in a democracy is, for better or worse, compromise born out of public discussion and debate. But such discussion would seem to be unattainable when the moral language employed by opposing sides is so completely antithetical. One can easily

a Mormon asking rhetorically: "How can murder be a First Amendment right?" One could also imagine a liberal Protestant, liberal Catholic, Reform Jew, or secularist asking just the opposite: "How can the exercise of basic First Amendment rights be called murder?" Political resolution seems sociologically impossible when the moral languge for talking about mutual problems is so contrary.

This problem is also crystallized within the debates about homosexuality. For the orthodox communities, homosexuality is "the zenith of human indecency"—a sin "so grievous, so abominable in the sight of God that he destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of [it]."[65] For most progressivists, homosexuality is "not unscriptural" but simply an alternative sexual lifestyle; one other way in which loving relationships can be expressed.[66] Once again each employs a fundamentally different moral vocabulary to understand this behavior. For one side, homosexuality is sin; for the other, homosexuality is "just one type of human behavior"—the only sin is the "sinful discrimination against lesbians and gay men."[67] As a consequence, any mutually agreeable resolution of policy, much less cultural consensus, is almost unimaginable.

Virtually the same moral impasse has been reached in discussions about war, inequality, pornography and obscenity, euthanasia, the use of fetal tissue for medical research, and other controversies. All of these disputes, as Alasdair MacIntyre has described them, are characterized by an "interminable character."[68] True, not all of these issues are equally polarizing. Nevertheless, the existence of common moral ground from which to build and resolve differences appears to be equally elusive in every case.

The moral arguments on either side of these disputes appeal with equal facility to the evidence of science (as, for example, in discussions about human biology), the precedents (or lack of precedents) from social history, and the legitimations of theology and biblical textual analysis. At least from a lay person's point of view, the logic of the competing claims is equally rigorous. But in the end, whether concerned with abortion, homosexuality, women's rights, day care, or any other major moral or political issue of the day, the tools of logic and the evidence from science, history, and theology can do nothing to alter the opinions of their opposition. Because each side interprets them differently, logic, science, history, and theology can only serve to enhance and legitimate particular ideological interests. The willingness or unwillingness of opposing groups to have a "dialogue" about their differences is largely irrelevant. Even a spirit of compromise maintained by either side would be irrelevant. *In the final analysis, each side of the cultural divide can only talk past the other.*

The orthodox and progressivist impulses provide the foundations not only for competing moral visions, then, but for competing dogmas. This is true because what both sides bring to this public debate is, at least consciously, non-negotiable. What is ultimately at issue, then, are not just disagreements about "values" or "opinions." Such language misconstrues the nature of moral commitment. Such language in the end reduces morality to preferences and cultural whim. What is ultimately at issue are deeply rooted and fundamentally different understandings of being and purpose.

To put this in the terms proposed by the French sociologist Emile Durkheim, what is ultimately at issue are different conceptions of the sacred. For Durkheim, the sacred was not necessarily embodied in a divine or supernatural being, the sacred could be anything that was viewed as "set apart" and "exalted"; anything that provided the life-orienting principles of individuals and the larger community. To know the nature of the sacred in each moral community is to know the source of their passion, the wellspring of their fervor. The reality, as Durkheim pointed out, is that communities cannot and will not tolerate the desecration of the sacred. The problem is this: not only does each side of the cultural divide operate with a different conception of the sacred, but the mere existence of the one represents a certain desecration of the other.

The Historical Significance

Needless to say, this cultural realignment has tremendous historical significance. Few would disagree that the rise of Christianity as a world religion between the first and third centuries, and the success of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century created the most fundamental cultural divisions in the history of Western civilization: those that divide Christian from Jew and Protestant from Catholic. As described earlier, the historical effect of these divisions was not only "religious" or cultural but manifestly and irrefutably political as well. They have been at the root of centuries of prejudice and discrimination. They have been at the heart of social strife and even war.

But if the organizing principle of American pluralism is shifting in the direction described here—so that progressively oriented Protestants,

Catholics, Jews, and secularists share more in common with each other culturally and politically than they do with the orthodox members of their *own* faith tradition (and vice versa)—then the practical effects of the birth of Christianity and the Reformation have, at least in the U.S. context, become both politically and culturally defunct.

If the organizing principle of American pluralism has shifted in these ways, then, it is because another world-historical "event" has become paramount. Yielding to the temptation of hyperbole, it could be said that the politically relevant divisions in the American context are no longer defined according to where one stands vis-à-vis Jesus, Luther, or Calvin, but where one stands vis-à-vis Rousseau, Voltaire, Diderot, and Condorcet, and especially their philosophical heirs (including Nietzsche and Rorty). The politically relevant world-historical event, in other words, is now the secular Enlightenment of the eighteenth century and its philosophical aftermath. This is what inspires the divisions of public culture in the United States today.

This, of course, is a caricature of our situation. Virtually everyone, nowadays, is influenced by the profound philosophical reorientation of the Enlightenment with its rejection of otherworldly "superstitions" and its emphasis on societal progress through human mastery over nature and rational judgment. Even the most Bible-believing Evangelical, the most Rome-bound Catholic, and the most observant Orthodox Jew has been influenced in subtle even if unacknowledged ways. What really divides our culture is the matter of priority—the sources upon which different moral communities rely *most* in establishing their own sense of right and wrong. Clearly there are people at each extreme, particularly those who act as voices for opposing communities. There are also, as we recognized in chapter 1, many people somewhere in the middle, who draw in varying degrees from both Enlightenment and biblical sources of moral understanding. (The fate of the "middle"—the majority of Americans—will be discussed in chapter 6.) Still, as a historical event, the Enlightenment has become an increasingly prominent source of division in American public life. The division is certainly "religious" or cultural, but it has unmistakably political consequences too. Already these have begun to take expression as new forms of prejudice, discrimination, social strife, and political conflict.

III

CULTURAL WARFARE