

For me, the key to thinking clearly about the whole range of issues Gamwell is mainly concerned with is *analogy*—specifically, the analogy between the state, its government, and the political process, on the one hand, and the original covenant of the human community and/or the special (or decisive) covenant of the church, on the other hand.

Lincoln's talk of the American people as "the almost chosen people" is a good example of using this analogy between the American state, government, and political process, on the one hand, and the "chosen," which is to say, special (or decisive) people, on the other. Or, again, his talk about his (and our) "ancient faith" is another example of using the analogy—in this case, between the American national covenant as set forth (not only but preeminently) in the Declaration of Independence, on the one hand, and both the original covenant and the special (or decisive) covenant, on the other hand.

My way of taking account of this analogy is to distinguish clearly between "*political faith*," on the one hand, and "*religious or philosophical faith*," on the other—taking "political faith" in the sense developed more fully in my papers, "What Do We Mean by Faith in American Public Life?" "Lincoln's 'Ancient Faith' and Ours," and "Theses on Globalization." In this sense, a political faith expresses the basic faith in the meaning of life that it necessarily presupposes as much as any religious or philosophical faith. But it does not fully explicate this faith religiously or philosophically, and anything it may appear to say determinately about either the ultimate ground of meaning or authentic self-understanding is to be understood heuristically rather than determinately. In this way, it abstracts altogether from all religions or philosophies as such in order to explicate solely the ^{moral and} political implications of basic faith as well as of any true or authentic religious or philosophical faith. So its point is simply that, however basic faith is to be fully explicated religiously or philosophically, the political implications it makes explicit cannot fail to be implied by any true understanding of human existence or authentic self-understanding, and so also by any valid religion or philosophy.

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