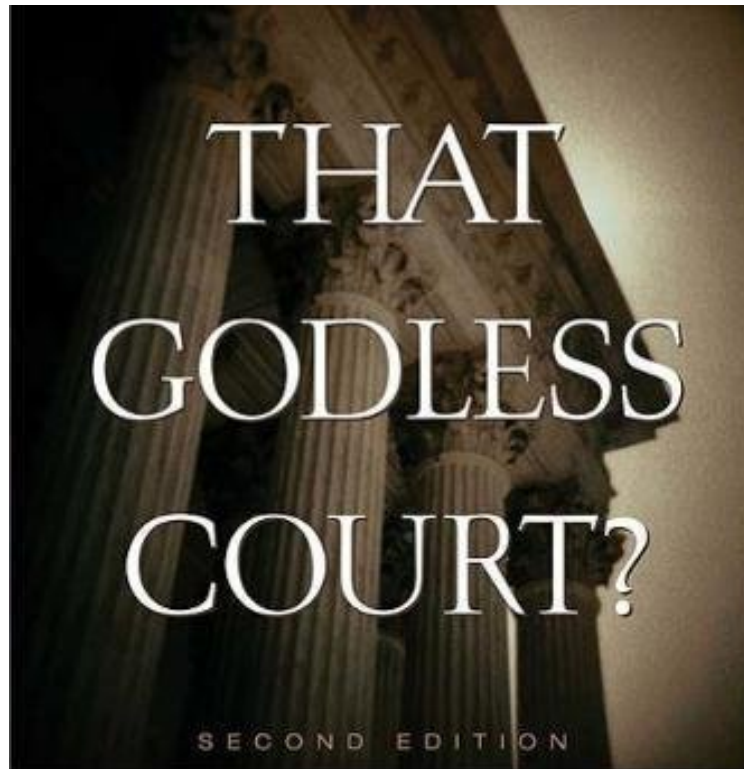


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The religion clauses of the First Amendment, which seem simple and clear, have been and continue to be controversial in their application. Church-state issues have never been more complex, controversial, and divisive than they are today. In this helpful and instructive book, Ronald B. Flowers explains clearly and concisely the intricacies and implications of Supreme Court decisions in the volatile area of church-state relations. This is an ideal primer for those Americans who have listened to the debates about what the Supreme Court has and has not said about the relationship between church and state, and where the boundaries between the two have been eroded. It is also ideal for use in the classroom, specifically in undergraduate courses in religion and the court, introductions to U.S. constitutional law, constitutional law and politics, and the Supreme Court. The book is also a helpful tool for pastors, clarifying contemporary church-state issues that impact their churches and parishioners directly and indirectly.

From BooklistHere's a book that's wonderfully long on information and mercifully brief but very cogent in its author's opinions. Coauthor of a text on church-state Supreme Court adjudication, Flowers is ideally informed to present the constitutional reasoning behind Court decisions in church-state cases. What's more, he writes with crystalline clarity and great impetus; his clean prose impels us forward at the same time that it bathes us in the light of understanding. The first chapter explains Court procedures and terms; the second traces the historical circumstances that eventuated in the First Amendment's religion clauses. Thereafter, Flowers proceeds chronologically through the important cases, discriminating those disputing the amendment's concept of free exercise from those contesting its other concept, that of governmental establishment of religion. At book's end, Flowers forwards his own views while forecasting "Flash Points and the Future." He argues that the Christian Right's insistence that government "accommodate" religion may, if realized, put churches under a regulation they will not like. Superb at first reading and promising as a reference. Ray OlsonFrom the Back Cover"Ron Flowers book, now revised and updated, has long been a classic. Flowers succeeds in synthesizing the sometimes arcane and often complex Supreme Court decisions interpreting the First Amendment's religion clauses. In a bumper-sticker world, Flowers avoids the temptation to over-simplify, but still presents the material in a way that students and the general public alike can understand. By the way, lawyers and scholars could benefit from a peek at it too!" --J. Brent Walker, Executive Director, Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, Washington, D.C. "At a time when misinformation and misunderstanding about the Religion Clauses and the role of the Supreme Court abound, this second edition could not be more timely. Flowers has accomplished what might seem to be the impossible in today's divisive climate: a coherent, readable, and comprehensive account of the Supreme Court and the cases that frame the issues at the center of church-state debate today. This highly accessible resource is essential for anyone wishing to make sense of the confusion wrought by the culture war." --Barbara A. McGraw, J.D., Ph.D., author of Rediscovering America's Sacred Ground: Public Religion and Pursuit of the Good in a Pluralistic America.About the AuthorRonald B. Flowers is John F. Weatherly Professor Emeritus of Religion at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas.