

# CASRN 111: Religion in American Culture

*Lecture notes for Religion in American Culture*

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### 1: Schmitt

- Three parallel critiques of the West's status quo (liberal capitalist democracy):
  1. John Dewey – criticizes traditional democracy's practices.
  2. Antonio Gramsci – criticizes capitalism.
  3. Carl Schmitt – criticizes liberalism (the show's focus).
- Liberalism here ≠ “U.S. left vs. right.” It's the Enlightenment project: limited government, rights, separation of powers, parliamentary rule, rational public debate, markets.

### Key definitions (as used in the episode)

- Pre-liberal: Political legitimacy grounded in revelation, tradition, and theocratic/monarchical authority.
- Liberalism: Enlightenment method for legitimacy grounded in reason, secular scholarship, rights, parliamentary procedures, and constitutional constraint.
- Sovereign: The actor who decides when the normal legal order is suspended—who decides on the exception.
- State of exception: An emergency in which constitutional/normal rules are set aside for decisive action.

- Normativism (Schmitt's term of critique): Faith that rules/constitutions can bind politics in all contingencies.
- The political (for Schmitt): Defined by the friend/enemy distinction—the basic grouping that can escalate to existential conflict.
- Post-liberal: A perspective (Schmitt's) that regards liberalism's self-description as utopian and seeks to describe the real logic of political power.

### Schmitt's argument—step-by-step map

1. Liberalism promised a break with the violent past. Replace revelation and absolute rulers with reason, debate, rights, and checks/balances.
2. But history didn't change as promised. Despite liberal norms, the 19th–20th centuries see dictatorships, wars, and instability. For Schmitt, that gap between promise and reality is the core indictment.
3. The “talk-it-out” premise is false at the limit. Liberalism presumes any dispute can be rationally mediated. Schmitt: many conflicts are existential (e.g., a movement that seeks your elimination). Debate cannot reconcile every cleavage.
4. Politics is not consensus—it's friend vs. enemy. Political identities form against an opposed other; the political is the possibility of conflict. Tolerance works during normalcy, but irreconcilable differences recur.
5. The sovereign never left; liberalism just hides it. Constitutions don't remove decisive power; they function during normal times. When a true crisis hits, officials act first, legalize later: the exception exposes where power really sits.
6. Normativism is an illusion (and can be dangerous). You can't pre-write rules for every contingency. Pretending you can both weakens response capacity and obscures who will actually decide when rules break.
7. Liberalism breeds apathy and identity vacuum. By recoding politics as a managed, professionalized arena, citizens drift into spectatorship and consumer identities. This hollowness invites strong-identity movements to fill the void.
8. Democracy vs. Liberalism tension. Schmitt insists they can conflict: democracy requires a demos (a concrete “we”), which presupposes boundaries (friend/enemy). Liberal universalism dissolves the “we,” undermining democratic decision.
9. Inevitability of the exception and capture. In a crisis (or manufactured crisis), actors can assume sovereign power “to save the constitution.” Liberal societies are vulnerable if they won't admit this mechanism exists.
10. Why fascism appealed (Schmitt's own dark turn). If you reject liberal constraints as illusions, the argument for a decisive, identity-forging regime can seem “rational” to some. The episode bluntly notes Schmitt's Nazi, antisemitic alignment—key for assessing his project.

### Core claims distilled

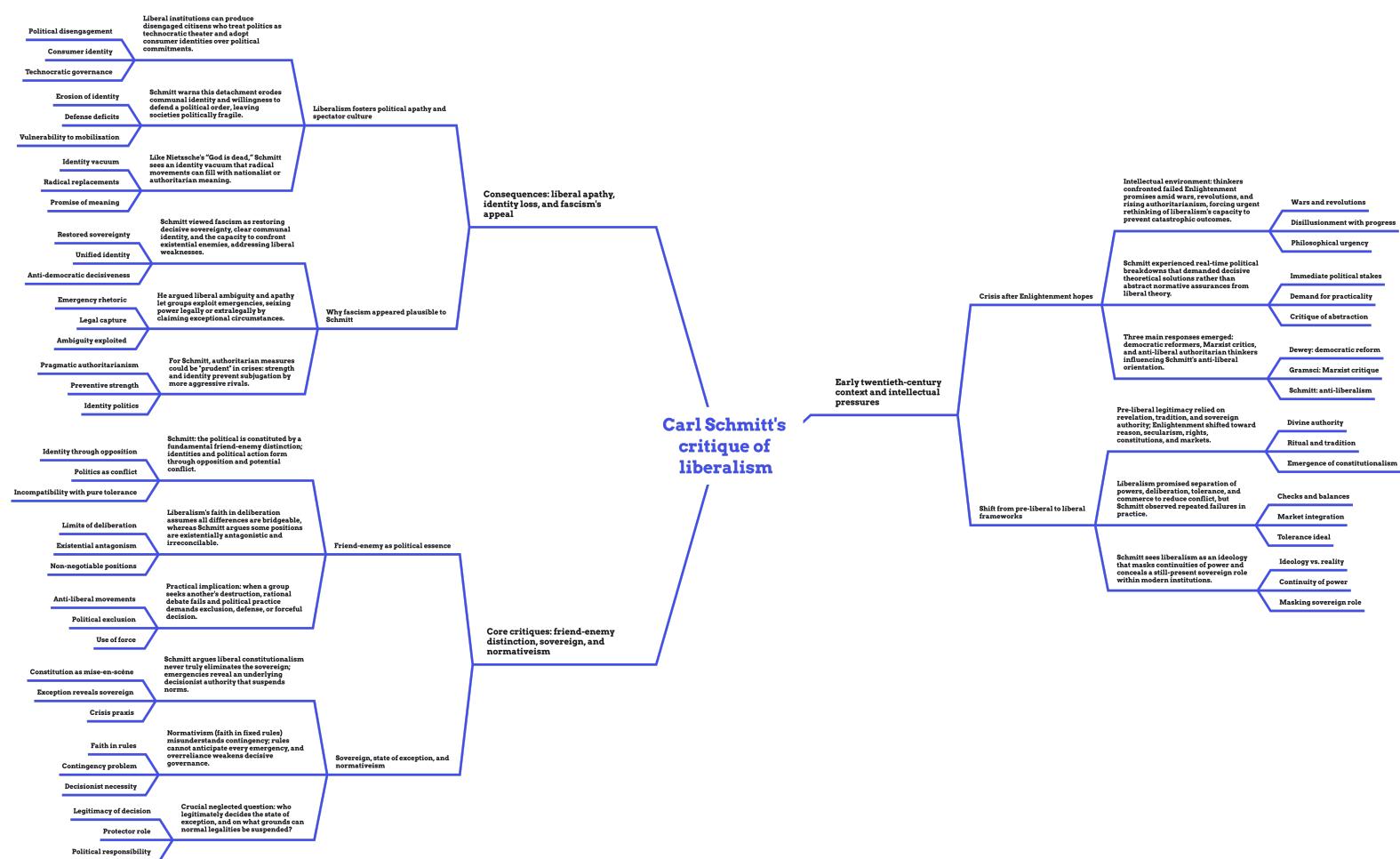
- Liberalism's self-image (rule of norms, rational debate, pluralism) fails at the decisive moments that actually constitute politics.
- The essence of politics is decision and distinction (friend/enemy), not deliberative harmony.
- The sovereign decision on the exception is the hidden heart of modern states, liberal or not.
- Constitutions regulate normal time; crises reveal real power.
- Liberal societies risk becoming weak, identity-thin, and manipulable.

## Practical takeaways for understanding Schmitt

- Ask of any system: Who decides the exception? On what authority? With what limits, oversight, and exit path?
- Distinguish normal time from exception time in institutional design.
- Treat identity formation as a real variable in political stability; procedures alone won't substitute for a shared "we."
- Beware apathy through proceduralism—but also beware romanticizing decisiveness that erodes rights.

## Mini-glossary (fast recall)

- Sovereign: The one who decides on the exception.
- State of exception: Suspension of the normal legal order in an emergency.
- Friend/enemy distinction: The constitutive line of the political, marking potential existential conflict.
- Normativism: Overconfidence that fixed rules/constitutions can bind politics in all conditions.
- Political theology: How modern political concepts echo older theological structures (e.g., sovereign ≈ miracle).



## 2: Inter Caetera

### The Papal Bull *Inter Caetera* of May 4, 1493

Introduced and translated by  
Sebastian Modrow and Melissa Smith

Christopher Columbus returned from his first voyage on March 4, 1493, landing first at the mouth of the Tagus River close to Lisbon, Portugal. He informed the Portuguese authorities of his arrival and met with King John II before continuing on to the Spanish port of Palos, arriving on March 15. He probably reached the Aragonese court in Barcelona by mid-April.<sup>1</sup> While still in Portugal or perhaps while on his way to the Spanish court, Columbus dispatched two letters written in Spanish describing the experiences and findings of his first voyage. One was addressed to his supporter and benefactor Luis de Santángel, Escrivano de Racion at the Court of Aragon, and the other to the Spanish monarchs, Isabella and Ferdinand. The letter was soon published (between late March and mid-April, most likely in Barcelona), and a Latin version (purportedly translated on April 29) was printed in Rome.<sup>2</sup> While Pope Alexander VI, a Spaniard himself, would have had no issues reading the Spanish version, it is likely that it was the Latin translation that was brought to his attention.

While clearly informed by Columbus's letter and whatever additional information the Spanish monarchs may have provided, *Inter Caetera* must first and foremost be seen and understood in the context of a series of papal bulls that reacted to the development of Portuguese and Spanish 'discoveries,' first along and off the western coast of Africa but later also with regard to the trans-Atlantic route to 'India.' The bull *Inter Caetera* was not even the first with this name. In 1456, Calixtus III, an uncle of the later pope Alexander VI, had issued a bull the main text of which, after the introductory protocol, began with these words (and a bull is usually named after these opening words). Going beyond the geographical scope of its predecessors *Dum Diversas* (1452) and *Romanus Pontifex* (1454), both issued by Pope Nicholas V, the 1456 *Inter Caetera* bull granted Portugal the right of conquest

"as far as the Indies' (*usque ad Indos*) - that is, Asia –," as William Henry Scott reminds us, "and threatened any challengers with excommunication. Similarly, after the Treaty of Alcobas ended Spain's unsuccessful attempt to do so, Sixto IV's *Aeterni Regis* of 1481 granted what had already been decided by naval artillery – Portuguese occupation of Atlantic islands like the Azores, Madeiras and Cape Verdes – and sanctioned all future such discoveries 'in the Ocean Seas' (*in mari oceano*), the waters believed to surround the Eurasian land mass. The question of eastern and western sea routes had not yet become an issue. European cosmographers, unaware of the existence of the American continents, did not doubt that the same waters washed the eastern shores of Asia and the west coast of Europe.

<sup>1</sup> William H. Scott, "Demystifying the Papal Bull 'Inter Caetera,'" *Philippine Studies* 35, no. 3 (1987), 350 and 352.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth M. Willingham, *The Mythical Indies and Columbus's Apocalyptic Letter: Imagining the Americas in the Late Middle Ages* (Eastbourne, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2015), 17. The 1893 Quaritch facsimile of the folio edition of the Spanish letter including a transcription is available through Google Books, <https://books.google.com/books?id=NPXCTYxu-R4C&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&f=false>, as is the 1893 Quaritch facsimile of the Latin letter, <https://books.google.com/books?id=9s0AAAAAYAAJ&pg=PR9#v=onepage&q&f=false>. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History provides an English translation of the Latin letter, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/sites/default/files/inline-pdfs/t-01427.pdf>

Thus when Ferdinand V sent Columbus into those waters to reach the Indies, he was breaking the oath he had sworn at Alcobas and defying papal excommunication.”<sup>3</sup>

Alexander VI’s *Inter Caetera* bull, the name of which was hardly chosen by accident, addressed and amended, therefore, an established framework of papal grants in a changed geopolitical reality, as Spain seemed to have discovered the western route to Asia. Its first version was ostensibly written on May 3, but it had in fact entered the Vatican registry (*Regesta Vaticana*) by the end of April 1493.<sup>4</sup> In order to avoid a violation of the stipulations of *Aeterni Regis* and the Treaty of Alcobas, which could have led to an open confrontation with Portugal, the pope granted the Spanish monarchs ‘only’ those lands that at the time of their discovery were not ruled by a Christian prince and made it very clear that “no right conferred on any Christian prince is hereby to be understood as withdrawn or to be withdrawn.”<sup>5</sup> This could hardly have been satisfactory to the crowns of Castile and Aragon, who, informed already about the results of Columbus’s first voyage, feared the Portuguese would enter a ‘discovery’ race in the west for which, in 1493, they were far better positioned than Castile and Aragon.

Alexander’s second version of *Inter Caetera*, dated only one day later (May 4) but written probably months after the first version, reproduces in large part the same text as the May 3 version but with one (twice mentioned) addition: The May 4 bull establishes a demarcation line for the spheres of the Spanish and Portuguese interests from the North to the South Pole “one hundred leagues to the west and south of any of the islands that are usually called the Azores and Cape Verde.”

The Latin text was established using the digitized original<sup>6</sup> as well as Davenport’s edition<sup>7</sup>. Mostly in concordance with Davenport but in contrast to the edition of Levy Maria Jordão,<sup>8</sup> it reproduces the original’s 15th-century Latin spelling as well as its capitalizations and only rarely disagrees with Davenport’s readings, as in its retention of the text’s *negocio* in contrast to Davenport’s hypercorrect *negotio*. However, while Davenport for the sake of greater readability dissolved all abbreviations, for this edition, the abbreviations are expanded by including the omitted letters in square brackets. We are aware that this might slightly decrease the readability of the edited Latin text but hope that it will increase and encourage the use of the original document, which in Davenport’s day was reproducible only as a black and white facsimile, in contrast to today’s high resolution digital surrogates. To further encourage the use of this edition alongside the (digitized) original, we also indicated line breaks with a slash where they occur in the document, which will hopefully help readers navigate the text in the original bull.

<sup>3</sup> Scott, “Demythologizing,” 350.

<sup>4</sup> Scott, “Demythologizing,” 352.

<sup>5</sup> *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and its Dependencies*. ed. Frances G. Davenport, (Carnegie Institution of Washington: Washington, DC, 1917), 56.

<sup>6</sup> “Bulla del Papa Alejandro VI dada el año 1493, en que concede a los Reyes Católicos y sus sucesores todo lo que ganaren y conquistaren en las Indias no estando ocupado por otros”. 1493-05-04 , Roma; MP-BULAS\_BREVES,4, Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla, Spain, <http://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas20/catalogo/description/17163?nm>.

<sup>7</sup> Davenport, *European Treaties*, 72-75.

<sup>8</sup> Levy Maria Jordão, ed., *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae Regum in Ecclesiis Africæ, Asiae Atque Oceaniae: Bullas, Brevia, Epistolæ, Decreta Actaque Sanctæ Sedis Ab Alexandro III Ad Hoc Usque Tempus Amplectens*, Tomus I (Lisbon: Ex Typographia nationali, 1868).

Translation differences between this new translation and Davenport's occur more often in tone than in content. Of the latter, the most important is probably this: When discussing the religious aims of these expeditions and conquests, the pope states that it is a priority for him that those barbarian peoples *ad fidem ipsam reducantur*, which Davenport translates as being "brought to the faith itself." However, since the semantics of the verb *reducere* carry an element of 'back/return' due to its prefix 're-', we decided to translate the clause as "bringing them back to the faith", the implications of which Sebastian Modrow is exploring in a separate piece of scholarship. With slight variations, this papal request to return the local populations to the true faith occurs multiple times throughout the bull.

ALEXANDER EP[ISCOPU]S  
SERVUS SERVO[RUM] DEI

Carissimo in [Chris]to filio Fernando Regi et  
Carissime in [Chris]to filie Elisabeth Regine  
Castelle, Legionis, Aragonum, Sicilie et  
Granate, illustribus, / Sal[u]t[em] et  
ap[osto]licam ben[edictionem].

Inter cetera divine Maiestati benplacita opera  
et cordis n[ost]ri desiderabilia, illud profecto  
potissimum existit, ut fides catholica et  
chr[ist]iana r[e]ligio n[ost]ris presertim  
temporibus exaltetur ac ubilibet amplietur et  
dilatetur animar[u]mq[ue] salus procuretur  
ac barbare nationes / deprimentur et ad fidem  
ipsam reducantur.

Unde cum ad hanc sacram Petri Sedem,  
divina favente clementia, meritis licet  
imparibus, evocati fuerimus, cognoscentes  
vos, tanqua[m] veros catholicos Reges et  
Principes, quales semper fuisse novimus, et a  
vobis preclare gesta toti pene iam orbi /  
notissima demonstrant, nedum id exoptare,  
sed omni conatu, studio, et diligentia, nullis  
laboribus, nullis impensis, nullisq[ue] parcendo  
periculis, etiam proprium sanguinem  
effundendo, efficere, ac omnem animum  
v[est]r[u]m omnesq[ue] conatus ad hoc  
iamdudum dedicasse -- quemadmodum  
recuperatio / Regni Granate a tyrannide  
Saraceno[r]um hodiernis temporibus per vos,  
cum tanta divini nominis gloria facta, testatur -  
- digne ducimur non im[m]erito, et debemus illa  
vobis etiam sponte et favorabiliter concedere,  
per que huiusmodi sanctum et laudabile ac  
im[m]ortalis deo acceptum propositum in dies /  
ferventiori animo ad ipsius dei honorem et

Bishop Alexander,  
servant of the servants of God,  
[sends his] most beloved son in Christ King  
Fernando and [his] most beloved daughter in  
Christ Queen Isabella, [regents] of Castile,  
Leon, Aragon, Sicily and Granada, salutation  
and apostolic benediction.

Among other works pleasing the divine  
majesty and close to our heart, this indeed  
stands out the most: elevating the Catholic  
faith and the Christian religion, especially in  
[these] our times, as well as extending and  
spreading it everywhere, securing the  
salvation of souls and subduing the barbarous  
nations and bringing them back to the faith  
itself.

Since we have been called to this Holy See of  
Peter by the will of the divine grace despite, of  
course, being undeserving, and because we  
recognize that you as those truly Catholic  
kings and princes, as we know you have  
always been and for which your splendid  
deeds so famous almost the world over serve  
as proof, not just desire it but turn it into reality  
with all effort and zeal and with full diligence,  
sparing nothing in terms of exertion, costs, and  
danger, shedding even your own blood, and  
that you have committed to this your whole  
heart and every effort for some time now - as  
your recent recovery of the Kingdom of  
Granada from the tyranny of the Saracens,  
which greatly elevated the glory of the name of  
God, attests - we [therefore] consider it worthy  
and appropriate and we feel obliged to grant  
you willingly and enthusiastically those things  
necessary to pursue, with daily growing ardor,  
such a sacred and commendable plan

imperij  
[christ]iani propagationem prosequi valeatis.

Sane accepimus q[uod] vos, qui dudum animo proposueratis aliquas Insulas et terras firmas, remotas et incognitas ac per alios hactenus non repertas, querere et inventire, ut illa[rum] incolas et habitatores / ad colendum Redemptorem n[ost]r[u]m et fidem catholicam profitendum reduceretis, hactenus in expugnatione et recuperatione ip[s]ius Regni Granate plurimum occupati, huiusmodi sanctum et laudabile propositum v[est]r[u]m ad optatum finem perducere nequivistis; sed tandem, sicut Domino placuit, Regno / predicto recuperato, volentes desiderium adimplere v[est]r[u]m, dilectum filium Cristophorum Colon, virum utiq[ue] dignum et plurimum com[m]endandum, ac tanto negocio aptum, cum navigiis et hominibus ad similia instructis, non sine maximis laboribus et periculis ac expensis, destinatis, ut terras / firmas et Insulas remotas et incognitas huiusmodi per mare, ubi hactenus navigatum non fuerat, diligenter inquireret;

qui tandem, divino auxilio, facta extrema diligentia, in mari Oceano navales certas Insulas remotissimas, et etiam terras firmas, que per alios hactenus reperire non / fuerant, invenerunt, in quibus qua[m]plurime gentes, pacifice viventes, et, ut asseritur, nudi incidentes, nec carnibus vescentes, inhabitant; et, ut prefati Nuntii v[est]ri possunt opinari, gentes ipse in Insulis et terris predictis habitantes credunt Unum deum crearem in celis esse, ac ad fidem catho[-] / licam amplexandum et bonis moribus imbuendum satis apti videntur, spesq[ue] habetur q[uod], si erudirentur, nomen Salvatoris, domini nostri Jh[esu] [christi], in terris et Insulis predictis facile inducatur; ac prefatus Cristophorus in una ex principalibus Insulis predictis iam unam turrim satis munitam, / in qua certos [christ]ianos qui secum iverant, in custodiā, et ut alias Insulas et terras firmas remotas et incognitas inquirerent, posuit, construi et edificari fecit; in quibus quidem Insulis et terris iam repertis, aurum, aromata, et alie qua[m]plurime res preciose diversi generis et

pleasing to the immortal God for the honor of God himself and the extension of the Christian realm.

We have heard, of course, that though for some time you had intended to look for and find certain remote and unknown islands and mainlands, heretofore undiscovered by others, in order to return their local population and inhabitants to the worship of our Redeemer and to the profession of the Catholic faith, you were not able to reach the intended goal of this your sacred and commendable plan, as you were until now most occupied with the conquest and recovery of the Kingdom of Granada; but when the aforementioned kingdom was finally regained, as it pleased the Lord, and wishing to follow your desire, you designated [our] beloved son Christopher Columbus, a man certainly worthy and most highly recommendable and suited for a task of this magnitude, together with ships and men equipped for such an undertaking under the greatest hardships, dangers and expenses, to carefully search for remote and unknown continents and islands of this kind across the sea, where no one had ever sailed before; with help from above and utmost perseverance while sailing the ocean, these [men] found certain very remote islands and even mainlands heretofore undiscovered by others and inhabited by an abundance of peoples who live peacefully and who go naked, as we are assured, and don't eat flesh. And the peoples themselves who dwell in the aforementioned islands and lands believe, as your aforementioned envoys have reason to assert, that there is one God, the creator, in heaven, and they appear to be ready to embrace the Catholic faith and to be imbued with good morals, and, if they are instructed, there is [good] hope for an easy introduction of the name of the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, in said lands and islands; and the aforementioned Christopher has already arranged for the construction and erection of a sufficiently fortified outpost on one of the main islands, which he left in the custody of certain Christians who came with him and who ought to search out other remote and unknown islands and mainlands; on those islands and

diverse qualitatis / reperiuntur.

Unde omnibus diligenter, et presertim fidei catholice exaltatione et dilatatione, prout decet Catholicos Reges et Principes, consideratis, more progenitorum v[est]ro[rum], clare memorie Regum, terras firmas et Insulas predictas illa[rum]q[ue] incolas et habitatores, vobis, divina favente / clementia, subiicere et ad fidem Catholicam reducere proposuitis.

Nos igitur huiusmodi v[est]r[u]m sanctum et laudabile propositum plurimum in domino commendantes, ac cupientes ut illud ad debitum finem perducatur, et ip[su]m nomen Salvatoris n[ost]ri in partibus illis inducatur, hortamur / vos plurimum in domino, et per sacri lavacri susceptionem, qua mandatis ap[osto]licis obligati estis, et viscera misericordie domini n[ost]ri Jhesu [Christi] attente requirimus, ut cum expeditionem hujusmodi omnino prosequi et assumere prona mente orthodoxe fidei zelo intendatis, populos in huius- / modi Insulis et terris degentes ad [christ]ianam religionem suscipiendam inducere velitis et debeatis, nec pericula, nec labores ullo unq[ua]m tempore vos deterreant, firma spe fiduciaq[ue] conceptis, q[uo]d deus Omnipotens conatus v[est]ros feliciter prosequetur.

Et, ut tanti negotii provinciam ap[osto]lice / gratie largitate donati liberius et audacius assumatis, Motu proprio, non ad v[est]ram vel alterius pro vobis super hoc nobis oblate petitionis instanciam, sed de n[ost]ra mera liberalitate et ex certa scientia ac de ap[osto]lice potestatis plenitudine, omnes Insulas et terras firmas inventas et inveni[-] / endas, detectas et detegendas versus occidentem et meridiem fabricando et constituendo Unam lineam a polo arctico scilicet Septentrione ad polum antarcticum scilicet meridiem, sive terre firme et Insule invente et inveniende sint versus Indiam aut versus aliam quancunq[ue] partem; / - que linea distet a qualibet Insula[rum], que vulgariter nuncupantur de los Azores et Caboverde, Centum Leucis versus

lands already discovered are found gold, spices, and an abundance of other precious things of various kinds and qualities.

Hence you proposed, after careful consideration of all things and in particular with regard to the exaltation and dissemination of the Catholic faith, as is befitting Catholic kings and princes, in the tradition of your ancestors, kings of illustrious memory, to subject said mainlands and islands and their local population and inhabitants with the help of divine grace and to bring them back to the Catholic faith.

In our strongest support in the Lord of this sacred and commendable plan of yours and wishing that it shall be carried to its rightful end and that the name of our Savior shall be brought into those regions, we urge you, therefore, most strongly in the Lord and by the reception of the holy baptism, through which you owe obedience to our apostolic mandates, and by the bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ's mercy, we order you sternly, if you, in your dedication to the true faith, devoutly intend to rigorously pursue such an expedition, that it be and has to be your intention to induce the populations living in those islands and lands to accept the Christian religion, and neither danger nor hardship should ever deter you in your steadfast hope and confidence that God Almighty will ensure the good outcome of your endeavors.

And, in order to take up more freely and courageously a task of such magnitude, given to you out of the generosity of the apostolic grace, by our own impulse, not at your or someone else's request on your behest in this matter but out of our pure magnanimity and a certain knowledge and full apostolic power, we draw and establish a line from the Arctic Pole, or north, to the Antarctic Pole, or south, irrespective of whether the mainlands and islands were found or are to be found towards India or any other region - a line that shall be distant one hundred leagues to the west and south of any of the islands that are usually called the Azores and Cape Verde, so that all islands and mainlands discovered and to be discovered, detected and to be detected, from said line towards the west and south, as long

occidentem et meridiem, Itaq[uo]d<sup>9</sup> omnes Insule et terre firme reperte et reperiende, detecte et detegende, a prefata linea versus occidentem et meridiem, per alium / Regem aut Principem [ch]ristianum non fuerint actualiter possesse us[que] ad diem Nativitatis domini n[ost]ri Jh[es]u [ch]risti proxime preteritum a quo incipit Annus presens Millesimusquadrungentesimusnonagesimus-tertius, quando fuerunt per Nuntios et Capitaneos v[est]iros invente aliue / predicta[rum] Insula[rum] -, auctoritate omnipotentis dei nobis in beato Petro concessa, ac Vicariatus Jh[es]u [christ]ji, qua fungimur in terris, cum omnibus illa[rum] Dominis, Civitatibus, Castris, locis et Villis, juribusque et jurisdictionibus ac pertinentiis universis, vobis heredibusque et successo[-] / ribus v[est]iris, Castelle et Legionis Regibus, in perpetuum tenore presentium donamus, concedimus, et assignamus, vosq[ue] et heredes ac successores prefatos illa[rum] Dominos cum plena, libera, et omnimoda potestate, auctoritate, et jurisdictione, facimus, constituius, et deputamus; / Decernentes nichilominus per hujusmodi donationem, concessionem, et assignationem n[ost]ram nulli [christ]iano Principi, qui actualiter prefatas Insulas aut terras firmas possederit usque ad predictum diem Nativitatis domini n[ost]ri Jh[es]u [christ]ji, ius quesitum sublatum intelligi posse aut auferri / debere. Et insuper mandamus vobis in virtute sancte obedientie, ut, sicut etiam pollicemini et non dubitamus pro v[est]ra maxima devotione et Regia magnanimitate vos esse facturos, ad terras firmas et Insulas predictas viros probos et Deum timentes, doctos, peritos, et expertos, / ad instruendum incolas et habitatores prefatos in fide catholica et bonis moribus imbuendum destinare debeatis, omnem debitam diligentiam in premissis adhibentes; ac quibuscunq[ue] personis cuiuscunq[ue] dignitatis, etiam Imperialis et Regalis, status, gradus, ordinis, vel / conditionis, sub excommunicationis late sententie pena, quam eo ip[s]o si contrafecerint, incurvant, districtius

as they were not in fact in the possession of another Christian king or prince up to the day of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ that just passed and from where begins our current one thousand fourteen hundred ninety-third year, when some of the aforementioned islands were found by your envoys and captains -, and with the authority of the Almighty God bestowed on us in our [succession of] St. Peter and of the Vicariate of Jesus Christ that we execute on earth and with the consent of the people present, we give, grant and assign in perpetuity to you and your heirs and successors, the kings of Castile and Leon, all the islands and mainlands found and to be found, discovered and to be discovered, in the west and south, with all of their dominions, cities, castles, towns and villages, and all rights, jurisdictions and domains, and make, appoint and regard you and said heirs and successors as their lords with full, free and all-encompassing power, authority and jurisdiction;

we decree likewise that no right of any Christian prince who in fact owned said islands or mainlands by the said day of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ can be challenged or invalidated by this gift, grant and assignment of ours.

And in addition, we order you by the virtue of holy obedience - as you also promised and we have no doubt you will do in your most profound devotion and royal magnanimity - to assign qualified and God-fearing, learned, experienced, and knowledgeable men to said mainlands and islands in order to instruct the aforementioned local populations and inhabitants in the Catholic faith and to imbue them with good morals, while you exhibit all necessary diligence in the aforementioned matters; and we strictly forbid any person of whatever dignity - even imperial and royal -, status, standing, rank or position, under

<sup>9</sup> Davenport writes it in lower case and as two words. I read the same seemingly capital "I" as in "Insule," etc., and it also appears to be contracted into one word in the manuscript.

inhibemus, ne ad insulas et terras firmas, inventas et inveniendas, detectas et detegendas versus occidentem et meridiem, fabricando et constituendo lineam a polo arctico ad / polum antarcticum, sive terre firme et insule invente et inveniende sint versus Indiam aut versus aliam quancunq[ue] partem, que linea distet a qualibet Insula[rum], que vulgariter nuncupantur de los Azores et Caboverde, Centum leucis versus occidentem et meridiem, ut prefertur, / pro mercibus habendis vel quavis alia de causa, accedere presumant absq[ue] v[est]ra ac heredum et successo[rum] v[est]ro[rum] predicto[rum] licentia speciali. Non obstantibus Constitutionibus et ordinationibus ap[osto]licis, ceterisq[ue] contrarijs quibuscunq[ue]:

In illo a quo Imperia et dominationes ac bona / cuncta procedunt confidentes, q[uo]jd, dirigente Domino actus v[est]ros, si huiusmodi sanctum et laudabile propositum prosequamini, brevi tempore, cum felicitate et gloria totius populi [ch]ristiani, v[est]ri labores et conatus exitum felicissimum consequentur. V[erum], quia difficile foret presentes / litteras ad singula queq[ue] loca in quibus expediens fuerit deferri, volumus, ac motu et scientia similibus decernimus, q[uo]d illa[rum] transumptis manu publici Notarij inde rogati subscriptis, et sigillo alicuius persone in ecc[lesi]astica dignitate constitute, seu Curie ecc[lesi]astice munitis, / ea prorsus fides in judicio et extra ac alias ubilibet adhibetur, que presentibus adhiberetur, si essent exhibete vel ostense. Nulli ergo omnino hominum licet hanc paginam n[ost]re commendationis, hortationis, requisitionis, donationis, concessionis, assignationis, constitutionis, / deputationis, decreti, mandati, inhibitionis, et voluntatis, infringere, vel ei ausu temerario contraire. Squis autem hoc attemptare presumpserit, indignationem omnipotentis dei ac beato[rum] Petri et Pauli Ap[osto]lo[rum] eius se noverit incursum.<sup>10</sup>

immediate<sup>11</sup> penalty of excommunication, which they would incur should they disobey, to undertake journeys for commercial or any other reasons to the islands and mainlands found and to be found, discovered and to be discovered, in the west and south without your and your aforementioned heirs' and successors' explicit permission, unless there are any conflicting apostolic regulations and decrees or any other obstacles, by drawing and establishing a line from the Arctic Pole to the Antarctic Pole irrespective of whether the mainlands and islands were found or are to be found towards India or towards any other region; a line that shall be distant one hundred leagues to the west and south from any of the islands that are usually called the Azores and Cape Verde, as stated above:

We trust in him from whom empires and dominions and all good things originate that, with the Lord's guidance, should you pursue such a sacred and laudable plan, your struggles and efforts will shortly lead to a most happy outcome, to the delight and glory of all Christendom.

But since it will be difficult to bring the present document to each place where it might be expedient, we wish and decree by similar impulse and knowledge that a transcript signed by the hand of a commissioned public notary and furnished with the seal of any person in an ecclesiastical office or from an ecclesiastical court may receive the [same] undiminished credence before the law and in other circumstances as the present one would receive if produced and displayed. No one is allowed, therefore, to infringe upon this our commendation's, exhortation's, request's, gift's, grant's, assignment's, regulation's, deputation's, decree's, mandate's, prohibition's and will's charter or act against it with impetuous insolence. Should someone dare to try just that, however, he may expect to incur the wrath of the Almighty God and of his apostles St. Peter and Paul.

<sup>10</sup> The Bullarium edition has omitted V[erum], quia difficile ... se noverit incursum ("But since it will be difficult...his apostles St. Peter and Paul").

<sup>11</sup> The pope uses here the canon law term *lat(a)e sententi(a)e*, which means that the law is already established and that any infringement will automatically lead to the established punishment.

Dat[um] Rome apud Sanctumpetrum, Anno Incarnationis Millesimoquadringtonesimononagesimotertio, Quarto Non[as] Maij, Pontificatus n[ost]ri Anno Primo.	Given at Rome at St. Peter's in the one thousand four hundred ninety-third year of the Lord's Incarnation, on the fourth of May, the first year of our pontificate.
Gratis de man[da]to s[anctissi]mi d[omi]ni n[o]str[i] p[a]p[e].	Gratis as ordered by our most holy lord, the pope.
Jun[io].	In June
P[ro] r[referenda]rio, A. de Mucciarellis	For the referendary A. de Mucciarellis
Pro lo. Buffolino], A. S[an]tos[e]verino.	For lo. Buffolino], A. S[an]tos[e]verino
L. Podocatharus.	L. Podocatharus.

### Direct conceptual links (*Inter Caetera* - Schmitt's argument)

- Sovereign decision vs. papal decision
  - Schmitt: “Sovereign is he who decides on the exception.”
  - *Inter Caetera* is a decision that creates a new legal-political reality (a pole-to-pole demarcation line; exclusive titles; automatic excommunication for violators). A textbook instance of sovereignty exercised through political theology: a theological office constituting geopolitical order.
- Norms in “normal time” vs. the “exception”
  - Constitutions bind in normalcy, but decisive power appears in crises. The bull acknowledges pre-existing treaties/rights yet overrides ordinary constraints by drawing a new line and granting dominion “with full,

free and all-encompassing power,” backed by spiritual sanction. Legal form plus decisive act—Schmitt’s point in motion.

- Friend/enemy construction
  - The bull frames non-Christian peoples as “barbarous nations” to be subdued and brought (back) to the faith—a categorical boundary that legitimates domination. A historical case of political identity forged through a civilizational friend/enemy split.
- Political theology → secular afterlives
  - The “Doctrine of Discovery,” born from these bulls, migrates into secular law (e.g., U.S. property jurisprudence from 1823 to 2005). A theologically grounded sovereign act becomes a juridical doctrine that structures modern sovereignty/territorial title—Schmitt’s “secularized theological concepts.”
- Repudiation and the durability of the political
  - The Vatican’s 2023 repudiation condemns the mindset of superiority underwriting the bulls. Schmitt would ask: Does moral repudiation dissolve the power effects they set in motion (titles, borders, legal precedents), or does the friend/enemy logic and the sovereign’s decisive trace persist beneath new normative language?

### Seminar discussion prompts

- Founding through exception: Does *Inter Caetera* exemplify a founding exception (a decision constituting a legal space) more than a rule-application? What would “constitutionalism” mean in 1493 under papal plenitude of power?
- From bulls to case law: How does the “Doctrine of Discovery” illustrate Schmitt’s political theology—the migration of sacral authority into the invisible axioms of modern property and state sovereignty? Where, today, do we still rely on such unseen founding decisions?
- Friend/enemy and civilizing discourse: In what ways do the bull’s categories (Christian/barbarian) pre-configure a friend/enemy world that later liberalism claims to transcend? Did liberalism transform that distinction or relabel it (e.g., “civilized/uncivilized,” “developed/underdeveloped”)?
- Repudiation vs. material redress: If the Church repudiates the doctrine in 2023, what decisions would be required (by Church or states) to undo its juridical afterlife? Is repudiation a normative gesture or a sovereign counter-decision?
- Liberalism’s “cover” question: Schmitt accuses liberalism of masking power with procedure. Is the NPR narrative of apology/repudiation an example of norm talk that leaves power relations intact—or is it a meaningful re-politicization that could enable new decisions?

### 3: John Winthrop, A Model of Christian Charity

- Occasion & aim: A lay sermon delivered aboard the *Arbella* as the Puritan settlers sailed to New England. Winthrop explains how the community must live so the colony survives and honors God.
- Theological frame: God ordains inequality (some rich/poor, powerful/weak) to create opportunities for charity, mercy, and mutual dependence. Difference isn’t a flaw; it’s the stage for Christian love.
- Core ethic—“justice and mercy”:
- Justice: keep covenants, repay debts, uphold order.
- Mercy/charity: go beyond strict right—give, lend, and forgive when a neighbor needs help (even when risky), imitate Christ’s generosity.
- Rules for giving & lending: Distinguishes giving (to the truly needy) and lending (to those likely to repay), but urges liberal hearts: prioritize need over profit, community over self, and be willing to risk loss for a brother’s good.

- Bond of perfection—Christian love: Love is the glue of the body politic. The community is like one body: if one member suffers, all suffer; if one rejoices, all rejoice. True love makes hard duties sweet and sustainable.
- Covenant & accountability: The settlers enter a covenant with God—obedience brings blessing, disobedience brings judgment. Their success is not just practical; it is covenantal faithfulness.
- “City upon a hill”: Because the world will watch them, their conduct must be exemplary. If they live this model of charity, others will glorify God; if they fail, they invite public shame and divine displeasure.
- Political-social vision: Hierarchy remains, but softened by mutual care. Magistrates and people are bound by reciprocal duties; private interests must yield to public good when necessary.

### Links to Schmitt and the bulls

#### Founding by covenant

Winthrop's sermon creates a community by a choice: the settlers agree before God to live by “justice and mercy.” That decision founds the rules. In Schmitt's terms, a decision makes the order. Compared to *Inter caetera*, which gives power from pope to crown, Winthrop builds a people from within—using shared belief and duty to organize daily life (who gives, who lends, who sacrifices for the common good).

“City upon a hill” = making a real “we”

The famous image forms a tight-knit ‘we’ under the world’s gaze. Schmitt says democracy needs a concrete people, not just procedures; Winthrop engineers that people with shared faith, mutual expectations, and roles (rich/poor, leaders/people) joined by charity. Inside: care and discipline. Outside: clear boundaries (not part of the covenant). Put next to *Inter caetera* and *Sublimis Deus*: Winthrop gives the moral script for settlers; the bulls give legal cover (and in *Sublimis Deus*, a claimed limit) even as expansion continues.

#### Norms both restrain and permit

Winthrop's rules for giving, lending, and forgiving really shape behavior—they aren't just talk—so this pushes back on Schmitt's idea that norms are only a mask. But the same covenant also permits hard choices when survival is at stake (public good over private right, obedience in crisis). In calm times, norms constrain; in emergencies, they authorize decisive action. Read together: *Inter caetera* shows a raw founding decision; Winthrop shows how pious norms can humanize hierarchy and power settlement. Norm and decision arrive fused—charity softens rule, covenant binds consciences, and both can be used to expand, defend, or suspend ordinary claims when the community deems it necessary.

#### Notes

- Justice and mercy as qualities to maintain the divine Inequality, not a pathway to equality.

## 4: John Edwards, Revivals of Religion

Edwards is writing during the Great Awakening. People are having intense religious experiences—crying, shaking, shouting, big crowds. Some say it's fake or dangerous. Edwards says: strong feelings don't prove anything by themselves, and they don't disprove anything either. What counts is the result over time: more honesty, humility, kindness, love of God and neighbor, better family life, less vice. He tells pastors and people: encourage the good, correct the bad. Don't shut the revival down, but don't let pride, chaos, or harsh judging take over. True revival lifts up Christ, obeys Scripture, produces steady, humble lives, and actually strengthens churches and public morals.

Connections to earlier stuff:

- Schmitt: He thinks rules often hide real power and only “decisive” acts matter. Edwards shows the opposite possibility: clear rules/tests (fruits, humility, order) can guide intense moments and make them genuinely constructive, not just raw decision or chaos.
- Inter caetera (1493): The bull uses sacred authority to authorize conquest. Edwards uses sacred authority to renew communities from within—no borders, no land grants, just moral testing and pastoral care.
- Sublimis Deus (1537): A norm that tries to limit abuse in empire. Like that, Edwards shows how norms (tests of true religion) can curb excess and protect people, not only justify power.
- Winthrop (“Model of Christian Charity”): Winthrop builds a covenant people by charity and duty; Edwards recharges that people a century later by conversion and fruits, so both aim at a tight, moral community.
- Ghost Dance: Both are mass religious movements. Edwards’s approach is to shepherd a revival with tests and teaching; U.S. authorities suppressed the Ghost Dance as a threat. That contrast shows how rules and patient guidance can contain intensity instead of turning it into conflict.