
Buy the book. In much of the world it seems that religion diversity constantly fosters national civil strife. But America, one of the most religiously diverse nations in the world, is relatively free of religious discord. What accounts for this unusual absence of conflict? To what extent does it stem from the separation between government and religion? Do we pay a price, through a weakening of religious influence in our national life, for maintaining that separation? Some argue that we do and that the nation ought, therefore, to support and encourage religion. Does this Constitution prevent this? Robert A. Goldwin is a resident scholar of constitutional studies at AEI. Book Description: Religion has become a charged token in a politics of division. Religious Freedom and the Constitution offers practical, moderate, and appealing terms for the settlement of many hot-button issues that have plunged religious freedom into controversy. It calls Americans back to the project of finding fair terms of cooperation for a religiously diverse people, and it offers a valuable set of tools for working toward that end. What is religious freedom exactly? The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution says that everyone in the United States has the right to practice his or her own religion, or no religion at all. Our country’s founders -- who were of different religious backgrounds themselves -- knew the best way to protect religious liberty was to keep the government out of religion. So they created the First Amendment -- to guarantee the separation of church and state. This fundamental freedom is a major reason why the U.S. has managed to avoid a lot of the religious conflicts that have torn so many other