ASSOCIATION FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION--SOUTHWEST

The 2012 Annual Proceedings of the ASSR-SW

Edited by:
Jon K. Loessin and Scott Stripling
Wharton County Junior College

Dallas, Texas
March 9-11, 2012

The Association for the Scientific Study of Religion—Southwest

presents

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President's Note

Welcome once again to the *Proceedings* of Association for the Scientific Study of Religion--Southwest (ASSR-SW). It is again both an honor and privilege to serve as ASSR-SW President and as a co-editor for *The Year 2012 Proceedings of the ASSR-SW*. Year after year, the Proceedings are another fine collection of papers and presentations from both our perennial authors and presenters as well as a host of new academic talent who bring with them new styles and topics. As usual, this year's papers are again both scholarly and exceptional.

The quality of these *Proceedings* attests not only to the fine work that has been accomplished by the efforts of many who participate and promote our meetings through research, writing, attending our sessions, and sponsorship through both donations and the purchase of this collection. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helps to make the ASSR-SW what is has been, what it is, and what it hopes to become. Joining the ASSR-SW is still free of charge and all we ask in return is your support and participation in our yearly sessions and helping to make them successful by writing and presenting papers, chairing sessions, purchasing a copy of the *Proceedings* and attending the presentations of others. It is important for our future that every member of the ASSR-SW not only encourages new membership at every opportunity but solicits scholars throughout the colleges, universities, and organizations at which you reside to become involved in our group through chairing sessions, writing and submitting papers, or holding office.

I would also like to take this opportunity also to acknowledge the officers of the ASSR for this past year. These are the people who, along with our presenters, truly made the Year 2011 meetings possible.

I hope all of you have a good year and the ASSR-SW will be looking forward to your participation in the ASSR in 2012-2013! Be sure to visit our Web Site at: www.assr-sw.org, complete with online publications of papers from past meetings (see the **Archives** on the site). Hopefully you will share this site with colleagues and students alike. Thanks.

This year, we would also like to keep in memory one of the original ASSR-SW founders and University of Louisiana Professor **Harry Hale, Jr. (1933-2011)** who served ASSR-SW for nearly thirty years serving as President, Proceedings Editor, Secretary -Treasurer, and participant.

Sincerely,

Jon K. Loessin, 2011-12 ASSR-SW President

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Abstract

The Durkheimian notion that there is a close correspondence between the type of religion within a society and the structure of the society itself is now taken to be nearly axiomatic. As societies become increasingly dynamic and fragmented, however, the nexus between religion and society becomes far more complex. With globalization and widespread movements of populations struggling to maintain their identities with both the old and new societies, changes of religion—including religious affiliation and religiosity—are inevitable. Cultural and social aspects of these changes are explored with reference to Indians who have emigrated to the United States.

In his now-classic work, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life,* Durkheim staked out epistemological territory that sociologists have taken as axiomatic since that time. For example, In a debate with the 'apriorism'[1] of Kant, Durkheim argued that there are categories of experience and reason that are universal.[2] Thus, certain cultural elements would also be universal. They are 'facts in common' that are inherited by all humans, as a consequence of the common structure of consciousness. This position, according to Durkheim, possesses the distinct advantage of avoiding the possibility of the dissolution of all categories of experience and understanding into a purely relativistic form of empiricism; a position that was taken, for example, by Hume.

The debate between Kantian 'apriorism' and Hume's empirical-based skepticism was one in which Durkheim was fully prepared to engage, and to use as a foil for establishing a unique sociological perspective. Against Hume, Durkheim stated his position: "…to reduce reason to experience is to conjure it [reason] away, for the universality and necessity that characterize it are reduced to pure appearance…all objective reality is removed from the logical life which these categories function to regulate and organize. Classical empiricism verges on irrationalism, and perhaps it should be labeled as such" (Durkheim: 2001 [1912]:16). One might surmise from this that Durkheim would align his argument with the neo-Kantians, although not in the same manner that Weber had done earlier in his famous essays based in part on the work of Heinrich Rickert, first published in 1904.[3] Durkheim's approach is far more nuanced, as is seen in his characterization of what he terms the apriorists. Durkheim praises those who adhere to this position for not denying the role of logic and the necessity of some form of organized perceptions—they cannot be merely randomly acquired or expressed. But from where does this necessary logic or organization come? It is here, Durkheim asserts, that the apriorists overreach: as 'rationalists,' they "believe the world has a logical aspect that reason eminently expresses. To do this, however, they must attribute to the mind a certain power of transcending experience and

[1] This is the term that Durkheim ascribed to those who argued the Kantian position.

[2] A similar argument is made by Anne Warfield Rawls (2005) who also that there has been a serious misunderstanding of Durkheim's position vis-à-vis dualism.

[3] Much of Weber's neo-Kantian perspective was based on correspondence with Rickert. See, for example, Weber's *The Methodology of the Social Sciences* (trans. Edward Shils and Henry Finch, 1949).

adding to what is immediately given; but they neither explain nor justify this singular power" (Durkheim, 2001 [1912]:16). Thus, the empiricists have experience without order or system; apriorists have order and system but cannot explain the unique nature of experience. Further, they have somehow 'transcended' the need to explain the source of the objectivity that they posit exists.

That Durkheim engaged in this argument early in the *Elementary Forms* demonstrates that he was still intent on establishing a rationale for a unique methodology for the social sciences, even though this was nearly the last of his works (he had addressed the need for a unique methodology in *The Rules of Sociological Method,* written over fifteen years earlier). Moreover, Durkheim was using this classic debate between the positions of the Kantian *a priori* versus the skepticism of Humean empiricism as a point of departure for outlining his own conception of the relation of society to religion, and of the relation of religion to the individual. The foundation for this conception is stated in his introductory essay to *The Elementary Forms:* "…if we accept the *social* [italics added] origin of categories, a new perspective becomes possible that should help us to avoid these contrary difficulties"[4] (Durkheim, 2001[1912]: 17). Society thus exists *sui generis*, and is irreducible to any collection of individual experiences or beliefs. "Society has its own features which are not found, or not found in the same form, in the rest of the world" (Durkheim: 2001 [1912]: 18). 'Society' exists independently of the individual, but also exists subjectively and internally, in the sense that these experiences and beliefs are shaped by the society. By inference, even for the individual to think about the society is mediated, to a high degree, by the society itself. This nexus is more than universal for Durkheim. It is unequivocally necessary.

This approach, Durkheim claims, "preserves all the essential principles of apriorism but is inspired by that spirit of positivism which [Humean] empiricism tried to satisfy" (Durkheim: 2001 [1912]: 21). In a very real sense, individuals as *humans* and the society in which they live are separate and distinct, but began the process of their differentiation simultaneously. Only when a shared sense of morality emerged could individuals become fully human, distinguishing themselves from other forms of life. But in this instant, the source of morality itself became externalized and was thus 'set apart' from any one person who shared this nascent social order. It became, Durkheim asserted, 'transcendental' (in the respect of being 'set apart') and independent of the person. The first community was thus a *moral* community that gradually formed rituals and rites to reinforce, protect and celebrate new *social* forces that existed externally to any one individual in the group. In fact, Durkheim referred specifically to these emergent societies as forces that were not only 'real,' but posessed the capacity to shape the realities of the persons in them: "When I speak of these principles as forces, I do not use the word in a metaphorical sense; they behave like real forces…they are even physical forces…and in addition to their physical nature, they have a moral nature" (Durkheim, 2002[1912]:192).

In a series of essays with Marcel Mauss (1901-1902), Durkheim states this relationship between individuals and the external entity they have constructed most succinctly: "*Now the classification of things reproduces this classification of men"* (italics in original) (Durkheim and Mauss, 1963: 10). This is a powerful statement, and it captures exactly the knowledge that Durkheim believed could only be obtained through the investigation of a small band of 'primitive' peoples who expressed only the fundamentals of belief. This classic statement implies a very dynamic nature of society posited by Durkheim and his colleagues (including Mauss) within the *Annee Sociologique.*[5] The externalization of the moral beliefs of more

[4] i.e., the 'difficulties' inherent in both classical empiricism and classical apriorism.

[5] The Annee, according to Coser (1977), was a closely-knit intellectual community, unlike the neo-Kantian group with which Weber is associated.

'complex' societies is, in principle, understandable in much the same way. Cladis, in his introductory essay to the 2001 translation of *The Elementary Forms,* provides an illustration that could have been instantly recognized by Durkheim himself or, still later, anticipated Bellah's (1975) notion of civil religion:

> …imagine this: a fellow citizen—a French Jew named Dreyfus—is unjustly accused and convicted of high treason. It is clear to you and others that he has been scapegoated by military and government officials: his rights have been betrayed. Soon, many rally to his defence. With marches in the street and flags and speeches in the air, your society is stirred and the social ideals of liberty and justice are renewed. You witness a moral community being forged: sacred rites and beliefs clearly emerge…You begin to realize that the elementary forms of religious life permeate not only traditional but modern societies as well (Cladis, 2001:vii).

The ethnographic evidence marshaled by Durkheim and Mauss—and the interpretation of that material—has undergone severe criticism since the publication of essays of 1912 (cf. Needham, 1963). Perhaps the most forceful was the remark by Evans-Pritchard (1960:99) that: "It was Durkheim, and not the savage, who made society into a god.' Most certainly, the ideas expressed in this and later works are not entirely new or unique. For example, Ibn Khaldun, writing in the fourteenth century, asserted that in large, sedentary societies, religion would emerge as the primary basis for social solidarity, superseding in importance even the state.[6] And yet, the contribution of the idea that religion forms the basis not only of social solidarity, but of individual identity, was seminal.[7] Durkheim, even as late as the publication of *The Elementary Forms*, did not intend to investigate in any systematic fashion the dynamics of change inherent in the society or the attendant shifts in religion—his was a consideration of the formation of society, and much less of the dynamics of the society itself. Later studies—for example, the classic survey of primitive religion by Lowie (1924)--took the same approach, and Goode's (1951) functional analysis was heavily influenced by Durkheim.

The first empirically-grounded attempt to extend Durkheim's theory to the social dynamics of change and modernization came with Swanson's signal work, *The Birth of the Gods* (1960). At the outset, Swanson identifies the 'elementary forms' of religion he will investigate:

> We shall ask about the experiences from which seven ideas might originate: the conceptions of a monotheistic deity, of polytheistic gods, of ancestral spirits, reincarnation, the immanence of the soul, the prevalence of witchcraft, and the notion of gods who concern themselves with human moral problems (Swanson, 1960:2).

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[6] See, for example, Khaldun's writings in translation by Duncan R. MacDonald, *A Selection from the Prolegomena of the Ibn Khaldun.* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1950).

[7] Parsons, for example, states that: "Durkheim opened up an entirely new line of thought by suggesting that…[there] was in fact no common intrinsic quality of things treated as sacred which could account for the attitude of respect. In fact, almost everything from the sublime to the ridiculous has in some society been treated as sacred…At this point, Durkheim became aware of the fundamental significance of his previous insight that the attitude of respect for sacred things was essentially identical with the attitude for moral authority (Parsons, 1949:52-66).

While conceding that these 'ideas' lack complete precision and may in fact be overlapping in some respects, his general purpose converges with that of Durkheim. In an elegant passage, Swanson states: "…behind natural events lies the supernatural—a realm of potentialities and purposes of which natural events are but concretions or expressions even as human behaviors or artifacts are expressions of the potentialities and purposes held by the men who express them" (Swanson, 1960:8). Thus—to retain Durkheim's language—the invisibly sacred becomes manifest in the highly observable activities of daily life. And even though these activities might not be viewed by their practitioners *as* 'sacred' in some fashion, having been incorporated into the natural attitude that constitutes their perceptions, values, intentions, and actions, the true foundations of these lie in that invisible realm.

However seminal this insight, it begs several questions related to the nature of social change. Echoing the Durkheimian view, religion is by definition a culturally conservative force, reinforcing and in fact celebrating existing traditions. The gods are the transcendent representatives of these traditions. In Swanson's argument there is the additional implicit assumption that a given social order is seen as natural and the gods who embody that order possess distinct, well-defined qualities: "…insofar as a group has sovereignty, it is likely to provide the conditions from which a concept of spirit originates. The purposes of sovereign groups, like their special sphere of influence [and hence, their representative gods] , tend to be distinctive and clear" (Swanson, 1960:21).[8] The ancient Hindu god Indra serves as one example. First identified in the oldest *Veda,* the *Rig Veda* (perhaps as ancient as 1450 B.C.E.—cf. Witzel, 2005), Indra was the god who led the invading Aryas into battle over the non-Aryan population of the Punjab (Dandekar, 1997), surpassing even Vishnu and Shiva in importance. He was, in fact, the leader of the Hindu pantheon of gods. For believers, he was seen as the creator of the world and the god of fertility, and was credited with having battled the powerful demon Vritra. He exemplified, in Swanson's conceptual framework, a 'superior god' who is at once "more abstract' in the respect that they "…affect the lives of all men engaged in activities relevant to the gods' interests in all times and places" (Swanson, 1960: 83).

But how can such a 'superior god'—the 'King of the Gods' (cf. Cutler, 2003) lose his power, lose his exalted place in the pantheon of gods, or even become forgotten altogether? Much of this has been the fate of the unfortunate Indra. One clue to the decline, if not the demise, of Indra is found in the epic *Ramayana.* In the early books of the *Ramayana,* the exceptional qualities and high position of the great warrior Rama himself are compared to Indra—the great upholder of *dharma*[9] (cf. Brockington, 2003). By the sixth book of the *Ramayana*, however, Indra's decline is reflected in the shift from Rama's comparison from Indra to the comparison with Vishnu, who remains to this day at the apex of the pantheon of Hindu gods, together with Shiva and Brahma.

From the perspective of the relationship between religion and society posited by Durkheim, this change in the status of Indra is quite predictable. The explanation (and even more importantly, the prediction) for the changes in religion parallel the changes that occur in society. The shift in identification with the mythic figure of Rama with Vishnu could reflect a trend in ancient Hindu society away from war and conflict to one of preservation, which is the province of Vishnu. Other authors, however, have offered alternative interpretations. Ganeri, for example, argues that Indra expressed powers of reason that could jeopardize the growing hegemony of the Brahmin caste in India. Obedience to religiously-based

[8] 'Nonsovereign' groups, according to Swanson, may possess a sense of the 'spirit' that is less well defined, reflecting the instability of their own social order.

[9] 'Dharma,' while possessing several subtle shades of meaning, might be most generally conceived as being the performance of sacred duty.

authority becomes paramount. He provides as evidence an episode in the *Mahabharata,* in which Indra appears as a jackal and relates this story about his transformation:

> I used to be scholarly, a reasoner, a scorner of the Veda. I was pointlessly fond of critical inquiry and the science of argument. I used to make declarations on the basis of logic: in assemblies, speaking with reasons, I harangued the Brahmins and was rude during the Vedic recitations. I was an unbeliever, skeptical about everything, and though stupid, I thought myself wise. The status of a jackal that I have obtained is the result (Ganeri, 2005:411).

Thus, there is no true 'invisible reflection' in this account: The transcendent power of religion is directly invoked by the immanent power of the religious in this world to reinforce personal and group status and security. It is an ironic reversal of the adage: "Whom the gods would destroy, they first make ridiculous" by purveyors of a set of interests that are tied to the power of religion. Here, it is a god—and the former 'king' of the gods—who is made to look ridiculous. Moreover, it points to a dimension that Durkheimiam theory largely fails to explore: As religion and society become more complex, and as individual and group power can become manifestations or reflections not of other-worldly forces but can be consciously manipulated and reinforced for advantage, the religious is dominated by the socially and politically dominant. This is, of course, much closer to the Marxian position than the Durkheimian, and this does not refer to fully industrialized, Western societies alone. In the case of Hinduism, Waghorne (2004),—taking a neo-Marxian approach—likens the transformation of goddess temples in Chennai to the sort of 'bourgeoisification' of the museum; a celebration of culturally-embedded institutions at the expense of the formerly sacred: …such public institutions [i.e., museums]…also form the middle class [and] give a clue to the goddess temples in Chennai as sites that may validate the middle class as a rising group' (Waghorne, 2004: 146). Religion from this perspective becomes a mechanism for legitimating and sustaining power, and if personal identity is at issue, then the identity derived from religion is inherently conservative (in the sense of reinforcing existing social institutions), this-worldly, alienating, and productive of false consciousness.

However, this position does not seem to capture the full range of religion, which has historically been an agent of social change and even revolution, as well as constituting a force for social repression and strictly-enforced maintenance of tradition (cf. Armstrong, 2004). Religion remains a powerful force, both in more traditional and highly modernized societies. The fact that there are various levels--both personal and social—as well as functions of religion, is articulated by Berger (1967), who recounts the forms legitimation has taken historically in China, Greece, Israel, and Rome, and concludes:

> …the historically crucial part of religion in the process of legitimation is explicable in terms of the unique capacity of religion to 'locate' human phenomena within a cosmic frame of reference. All legitimation serves to maintain reality—reality, that is, defined in a particular human collectivity. The inheritantly precarious and transitory constructions of human activity are thus given the semblance of ultimate security and permanence…the humanly constructed nomoi are given a cosmic status (Berger, 1967:35-36).[10]

[10] 'Nomoi,' for Berger, refer to the ordered meanings that individuals create engendering norms, habits, and a personal *Weltanshauung* (cf. Kurtz, Lester. 2007. *Gods in the Global Village, 2nd ed).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

While echoing the theme of Durkheim's work that religion serves both to shape and legitimate social reality, there is also a significant shift in emphasis toward religious belief and individual identity. In Berger's account, it is not so much the tension and symbiotic relationship of society and religion that is important, as is the role that religion plays in the lives of persons in the society. Berger constructs a three-part process of internalization, integrating the social and the personal. The first, *externalization*, refers to the continually production of human activity, which become tangible in material form as various as tools, weapons, art and literature, or in cultural forms such as myths and social networks (cf. Griswold, 1994). This notion (which was adumbrated by Durkheim), begins to take on individual expression in the next stage, *objectivation,* as the forms, once produced, begin to take on the cast of an external reality that is recognizable (and expected) on the part of the individual. This again has much in common with the established Durkheimian theme. The difference in theoretical emphasis occurs in Berger's final stage of *internalization*, in which the objectified 'reality' becomes fully internalized. The individual then becomes the focal point for the production of social reality, which is reproduced objectively but experienced subjectively.

Berger illustrates this operating in the central belief of *dharma* operating in Hinduism: 'the violation of [one's individual] *dharma* is not just a moral outrage against society, but an outrage against the ultimate order that embraces both gods and men and, indeed, all beings" (Berger, 1967:40). That this perspective is still fundamentally Durkheimian is demonstrated in Berger's contention that the individual who rejects or is somehow cut off from religion faces the prospect of the loss of the 'nomos' and resulting state of anomie (Berger, 1967:50). In traditional societies, in which religion was either the undisputable dominant or even the single dimension of social life, separation from religion was tantamount to separation for the community.

With increasing differentiation and complexity, there is no overarching 'social canopy,' as Berger's metaphor suggests. Identity may be captured and expressed in any number of institutions, organizations, and groups apart from religion. From at least the 1960s, sociologists were proclaiming an inevitable trend toward secularization. As Harvey Cox, author of *The Secular City* proclaimed:

> The world looks less and less to religious rules and rituals for its morality or its meanings. For some, religion provides a hobby, for others a mark of national identification, for still others an aesthetic delight. For fewer and fewer does it provide an inclusive and commanding system of personal and cosmic values and explanations (Cox, 1971:3).

Oddly, however, the inevitable secularization trends predicted from at least this time onward have not occurred, even in the United States, arguably the most highly differentiated, postindustrial society (cf. Gorski, 2000; Stark and Finke, 2000; Hout and Fischer, 2002; Sax et al., 2004). Individual identity still finds expression in religion and, as Wuthnow (1998) suggests, the trend toward secularization may have been misunderstood by sociologists, as the *forms* which religion now take often differ significantly from those taken by earlier established (and easily identifiable) denominations.[11]

As a result of these recent investigations, several preliminary conclusions obtain: (1) the general Durkheimian model still retains theoretical power in explaining the emergence and

[11] Wuthnow (1998) suggests that there has been a movement away from religious 'dwelling,' or practicing religion in established spaces (e.g., church, synagogue, mosque or temple), to religion 'seeking,' which leads the person on a religious quest that includes more private practice of belief and even ritual.

social significance of religion; (2) religion, as society becomes more differentiated and complex, also becomes increasingly differentiated; (3) religion as practiced by individuals takes on differing forms that are increasingly difficult to identify or categorize; and (4) these new expressions of religion, in tandem with more established forms, retain significant influence in shaping individual identity in differentiated, complex societies.

But perhaps neither '*society'* nor '*religion'* can remain the fundamental units of analysis. With respect to religion—a highly transportable belief system that crosses national borders with its believers--globalization has increasingly rendered 'society' to the status of analytical artifact. Thus, new questions arise regarding the notion of the 'transnational' character of religion, with the accompanying tranformations this change effects in the lives of individuals. To what extent does the person come into a new, globalized locale (but one that is 'dis-locating' in terms of identity), with a specific religious perspective, and how does that perspective work to shape his or her self in a new social milieu, and what, in turn, are the reciprocal effects of the new milieu on religious identity over time? And even religion in the sense of 'religious affiliation' cannot be conceptualized in the same manner as previously—it too has become less meaningful as an analytic category. A recent (2008) study of American religiosity by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, for example, finds 25% of American adults have left their original faith, and that if movement between Protestant denominations is included, 44% have changed their religious affiliation at least once. Further, the number of native-born Catholics has declined most sharply, and the Pew report concludes that "roughly ten percent of all Americans are former Catholics." Moreover, while the Pew Report finds that if those who claimed 'no affiliation' were counted as a religious group, this group would be the fourth most populous in the United States. The Pew report also cautions that this decline does not necessarily correlate with a decline in religiosity, and that 'private religion' may reflect the added dimension of privatized 'seeking' over public 'dwelling.'

Religious Transformation and Immigration: When Religion Crosses Cultural Boundaries, Is It Like Cuisine? Hinduism in the United States

In the language of Foucault, there can occur a profound 'cultural silence' for those who find themselves facing the challenge of reconstructing their identities in a new land where traditional institutions dissolve. It is in this 'silence' that significant meaning can be discovered. For Indians, this silence and reconstruction can occur within India itself, which is experiencing radical transformations in all institutions. In the process of re-disovering and remaking their identities, what is the new role of religion? Is it possible for a religion to retain its identity—in terms of form and function—as its adherents move into highly dissimilar cultural contexts? In asking these questions of Hinduism, one is instantly confronted with the same truism that applies to any analysis of Indian culture: to describe any one aspect is to call into being its contradiction. However, it might be safely posited at the outset that Hinduism possesses qualities that are highly syncretic (cf. Fellows, 1998).[12] Babb (1986:1) remarks that: "…the Hindu religious imagination…is expressed as the Hindu tradition's ability to generate multiple and various interpretations within a common frame of reference. It is not static but endlessly protean and full of creative possibilities." In turn, this syncretism has produced, despite the perceived conception of Hinduism as insular and traditional, structures and beliefs that facilitate change and productive of new avenues for the

[12] MacKenzie (1994:102) writes that: "The history of Hinduism is the history of a continual struggle between the devotees of folk religion and the expounders of Forest Books produced by the speculative sages who, in their quest for truth, used primitive myths to illustrate profound doctrinal teachings."

expression of identity. As an intellectually 'decentraliized' religion, Hinduism itself may have harbored seeds of rebellion against caste. For example, the doctrine of *bhakti*[13] frees, at least to some degree, the practicing Hindu from the imposition of doctrine imposed by the dictates of doctrinal knowledge alone. Fifty years ago, Singer (1958) found that even Brahmins were often joining and even leading the movement toward *bhakti* (devotional love) although it was, in many ways, inimical to the mechanisms of religious control long attributed to this caste.

Yet, the gradual erosion or blurring of caste lines has let to a contrary trend: that of Sanskritization. As Luce (2007:125) states: "This term describes a trend in which the lower orders are now copying the culture of the upper orders by following the same gods, attending the same temples, and celebrating the same festivals." Interestingly, Marriott's fieldwork, in a study now nearly sixty years old, concluded that the process of Sanskritization has proceeded quite slowly, which he found surprising in a religion and culture so ancient. However, since that time, Sanskritization appears to be proceeding at a pace that is accelerating, and brings with it an interesting contradiction. On one side, Sanskritization was made possible by the legal strictures and social erosion of caste. Without these, it would be impossible for lower castes to mimic the beliefs and behaviors of the higher castes. On the other side, Sanskritization reinforces in some measure the legitimacy of caste through imitation. Politically, the lower castes may be acting in the opposite direction,[14] but socially and religiously, their beliefs and practices are becoming more similar. As Luce (2007:125) states: "…attributes, such as dress or dietary habits, have become increasingly general to all castes…If you enter an urban home in today's India, it would be hard to tell the caste of its occupants. The gods depicted in the small household shrine are the same. The people follow the same traditional upper-caste rituals."

Another, more radical shift in Indian religion is that of the neo-Buddhism of Bhimrao Ambedkar who, as Luce 2007:12) accurately states: "…to millions of Indians he is a more important figure than Gandhi." Ambedkar's message to Dalits and to India generally is tightly woven into the cultural fabric of that society. He was a primary author of India's constitution (written in 1950), which provides voting rights for all adult Indians, including the Dalits, who now number over two hundred million.[15] Ambedkar, rejecting the socialist and communist critique of the caste system as merely an economic tool, commented that: "Untouchability, although it can give and does give economic advantages to the Hindus, is primarily based on religion. There is nothing sacrosanct in economic and social interests" (Ambedkar, 1979, v. 1: 44). This is, of course, a more radical departure (in many cases, literally) from Hinduism: rejection of the caste system requires a categorical rejection of Hinduism. For this departure Ambedkar (1979, vol. 7:32) cites the *Rig Veda X,90* and the *Manu Smriti I respectively:*

> When they divided Purusha how many portions did they make? The Brahmin was his mouth, and from both his arms the Kshatriya was made. His thighs became the Vaishya, and from is feet the Shudra was produced…
>
> …But to protect this whole creation, the lustrous one made separate activities for those born of his mouth, arms, thighs, and feet. For Brahmins, he ordained teaching and learning, sacrificing for themselves and sacrificing for

[13] "Bhakti" may be defined as the emphasis on devotion and love of God, as opposed to 'jnana', which is an emphasis on wisdom or knowledge as a path to understanding the nature of God.

[14] Luce (2007:125) remarks: "…in the political world, India's lower castes move in the opposite direction from 'Sanskritization," which many now follow in their children's schooling."

[15] This does not mean, however, that Indians no longer vote independently of their caste interest. Communalism has become such a significant aspect of Indian democracy that the joke: 'In India you do not cast your vote, you vote your caste,' retains a high degree of truth.

> others, giving and receiving. For the Kshatriya are protecting his subjects, providing, having sacrifices performed, and remaining unaddicted to sensory objects. Protecting his livestock, giving, having sacrifices performed, studying, trading, lending money, and farming the land are for the Vaishya. The Lord assigned only one activity to the Shudra: serving these classes without resentment.

Omvelt (1976: 112) has commented that this metaphor of society 'emphasizing the reconciliation of opposing in the common welfare and the harmonious interaction' is imbued with a theme of ideological dominance that legitimizes a system of inequality.

Finally, the most dramatic shift in Hinduism may very well be the Indian diaspora to Europe and North America. In addition to the traditional meaning of the term as a shift in population across space and borders, 'diaspora' can also connote a radical shift in world-view as a result of disculturation through the process of joining a transnational community. In the case of Hindus in Canada and the United States, this 'transnational community' may be their own. In Canada, Indians have been arriving steadily and forming strong communities (particularly in Ontario) for that past 100 years. In the United States, the population growth has been much different: immigration restrictions on south Asians in 1917 and 1924[16] virtually halted all Indians from entering; it was only in 1965, with the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Services (INS) Act, that the Indian population began to increase dramatically. A recent report released by the Department of State[17] places the number of Hindus in the United States at over 1.5 million. As the second and third generations arrive, each is presented different challenges. Separating from the home country and from the family's traditional lifestyle, combined with assimilation into a rapidly changing society dramatically impacts the collective identity of this group, as Khyati Joshi (2006) has ably documented. In a series of extended interviews with second-generation Indian immigrants to the United States, she finds that Hinduism is being reintroduced and reformulated in ways that far transcend early oral or family traditions. For example, she writes that: "One female research participant…described learning most of what she knows about Hindu wedding rituals from Bollywood movies; viewing them sparked conversations with their mother about Hindu tradition and even about her parents' own arranged marriage" (Joshi, 2006: 196).

From her research, Joshi notes the dynamic and resilient power of religion to sha[18]pe identity amid the changes of globalized individuals living in a globalized society and concludes that: "Studying the tenets of Islam or Hinduism or Sikhism, while fascinating, is only a small step in the right direction. We must develop ways of understanding how the followers of those faiths see religion, how they embrace it and act it out—in short how they live religion every day (Khyati, 2006: 198). Thus, Berger's 'sacred canopy' remains, but its tapestry is constantly becoming outdated, renewed, and transformed. To appreciate the process of this change is becoming of equal value, sociologically speaking, than our tendency to focus on religious content alone.

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[16] These were known, respectively, as the 'Barred Zone Act' and 'National Origins Act.' Together, they restricted the movement of Indians into the U.S. almost completely.

[17] View the U.S. Department of State's policies and regulations at: http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/appendices/index.htm.0

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Leaders of New Religious Movements: Who Leads the Leader?

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Introduction

Does the leader of a new religious movement create the movement to his/her inclination or do the members mold the leader into their own ideal? Cult leaders are known for charismatic personalities and narcissism while followers are thought to be naive, to exhibit self-esteem issues and needy behavior. Are these alleged personality traits a reality? Is the leader as dependent on the group as the group is dependent on the leader? Does a socialization feedback loop shape a new religious movement's followers and leader?

Leaders of New Religious Movements: Who Leads the Leader?

A cult or new religious movement is a counter culture which results in a subculture or paraculture, a society in itself. (Chandler-Ezell, 2007; Wallace, 1970) A cult or new religious movement is a religion or sect considered by outsiders or the mainstream to be false, unorthodox, or extremist, with members often living outside of conventional society under the direction of a charismatic leader. (*Cult*, 2003) With guidance from their leader the members create, shape and sustain the social norms for the cult which serve as social constructs that demand conformity of not only the members but the leader as well. (Button, 2011; Oakes, 1997) Even though the expectations of the leader are different from those of the followers, if the follower's expectations are not met, the leader will find itself without a following. (Oakes, 1997) Disappointed followers may find a new figurehead that meets their expectations or the entire group may dissolve. (Oakes, 1997) The degree of control the members or followers have over the charismatic religious personality will be examined in this paper with social theory from Albert Bandura, Len Oakes and Susan Blackmore. (Blackmore,1999; Goetz, 2011; Oakes, 1997) To understand the group one must first understand the leader and the followers as separate yet interdependent parts of the whole.

Oakes, once a cult member himself, is an Australian psychologist who has focused his research on charisma. Len Oakes' data provides a detailed study of the life cycle of the 'charismatic religious personality'. The charismatic leader undergoes an idealized model of transformation that begins at birth. Understanding the **childhood narcissism**, **adolescent incubation** and **awakening** of the charismatic leader is necessary to understand how Oakes describes the leader's role in the new religious movement. (Oakes, 1997) However, it is important to note that not all charismatic leaders of new religious movements will follow this exact ideal mode.

Childhood narcissism begins with 'baby worship' from the primary caregiver (PCG) who is usually the mother. (Oakes, 1997) The child is rewarded when it exhibits godlike behavior and the child observes the insecurities of the PCG when it exhibits ungodlike behavior. (Oakes, 1997) Being the object of baby worship, the child develops a delusion of oneness with the PCG. (Oakes, 1997) The belief that the PCG will not love the child unless he or she is god is internalized. (Oakes, 1997) Primary narcissism emerges leading the way to adolescent incubation. (Oakes, 1997)

According to Oakes, the **Incubation** stage in this model is the most essential to the development and success of the charismatic religious personality. (Oakes, 1997) This stage is marked by a lack of reference groups with which the adolescent can feel a sense of belonging. (Oakes, 1997) The leader's grandiose narcissistic world view is cemented, as

well as a myth of calling characterized by a need to be approved by a higher power. (Oakes, 1997) A critical part of the incubation stage is the splitting of personality. (Oakes, 1997) The self is split into two parts: the visionary self or the idealized self and the Jungian shadow self, which will be repressed. (Mack & Mack, 1999; Oakes, 1997) Radical autonomy and conflicts with authority during this stage may result in discourteous behavior directed towards religious leaders and criminal activity. (Oakes, 1997) The incubation period is the stage in which the future leader will acquire appropriate career skills. (Oakes, 1997) These skills are varied dependant on the leader's preferences and may include higher education, learning manipulation techniques, management experience, financial skills, knowledge of sacred tests and an attempt to recreate a sacred cultural image (Christ, The Buddha, etc...) (Oakes, 1997) The incubation stage will shape the awakening of the charismatic religious personality. (Oakes, 1997)

During the **Awakening stage** the leader will receive approval from a higher power through mazeway resynthesis. (Oakes, 1997; Wallace,1970) The mazeway resynthesis is a deeply emotional experience in which a leader will experience altered states of consciousness. (Wallace,1970) The leader will reform current perceptions of reality into a coherent synthesis which support the myth of calling. (Oakes, 1997; Wallace, 1970) This will not be a single experience but an intense series of altered states of consciousness that are ineffable, noetic, transient and willed. (Oakes, 1997; Winkelman & Baker, 2010) These experiences will be interpreted by the future leader affirming the grandiose myth of calling. (Oakes, 1997; Winkelman & Baker, 2010) The interpretation of the altered states of consciousness is dependent on previous experience from the leader's incubation stage. (Oakes, 1997; Winkelman & Baker, 2010) The egoistic belief that reality is centered around the leader's self allows the leader to altruistically love followers unconditionally as an extension of its self. (Oakes, 1997)

The members of these new religious groups are commonly misconstrued as unintelligent, abnormal and mentally unstable. However, according to Rick Ross (a cult expert and cult deprogrammer) a sample of cult members usually reflects the main population psychologically and socially. (Bueno & Regas M.W., 2002) Some outliers exist but the occurrence of such outliers is less frequent than commonly thought. (Bueno & Regas M.W., 2002) Cult members are usually well educated, intelligent and sane people who have become disenchanted with mainstream religion. (Bueno & Regas M.W., 2002; Oakes, 1997) Members tend to join cults during liminal stages or times in between important markers in one's life. The time between graduation from college and gainful employment is an example of a liminal stage. New recruits see the group as an acceptable means to achieve an important personal goal with the guidance of the other members and the leader. (Oakes, 1997) A major factor that will determine how long a new member stays is the group's ability to help the member achieve their personal goal. (Oakes, 1997) Other factors include meeting the member's basic psychological, social, intellectual and spiritual needs. (Oakes, 1997) Techniques such as love bombing sabotage of secular relationships, and intensive group rituals are meant to create a sense of communitas within the group to deter members from abandoning the group. (Oakes, 1997)

Albert Bandura, a psychologist who studied social cognitive theory, constructed the theory of feedback loops which play a large role the member/leader relationship. Followers observe the actions of the leader and other followers. (Goetz, 2011) They then process these actions and the consequences of these actions. (Goetz, 2011) They will then react to the actions of the others and the feedback loop will restart. (Goetz, 2011) If the members perceive the leaders behavior to be undesirable or detrimental to their goal they may leave. (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 1999; Goetz, 2011; Oakes, 1997) A member leaving is a painful experience for a cult leader. (Oakes, 1997) The leader needs its followers much more than they or even the leader realizes. (Oakes, 1997) Just as the leader experiences dualism with

its primary care giver, the leader also experiences dualism with its followers. Baby worship becomes adult worship. (Oakes, 1997) The leader may believe that it does not need the followers when the relationship is indeed symbiotic. (Oakes, 1997) In its narcissism the charismatic personality takes members leaving very personally. (Oakes, 1997) In the childhood narcissism stage the leader saw its mother as an extension of itself and now the leader's followers have filled the role of its mother. (Oakes, 1997) Baby worship has now become leader worship. (Oakes, 1997)

New religious movements tend to have a constant stream of members joining and leaving the group. The constant flux of members brings with it new group expectations and norms. These expectations and norms can be viewed as memes. According to Richard Dawkins(ethologist and evolutionary biologist) a meme is an idea, behavior, style, or usage that replicates in society, much like a virus, independent of its originator.(Blackmore,1999) Memes are constantly created and destroyed evolving within the new religious movement. The leader and the group must create a religious tradition based on those memes by coalescing them into a coherent whole. (Chandler-Ezell, 2007; Oakes, 1997) The tradition must be simple while still meeting the basic psychological, intellectual, social and spiritual needs of the members. (Oakes, 1997) The constant introduction and revision of memes may mold the group and the leader more than they realize. In this sense the group molds the leader to be the embodiment of their unachievable ideal. Is it possible that the leader will bend to the will of its members to prevent the psychological torment of 'self-abandonment'? If this is the case, the alteration of the new religious movement is a constant cycle of meme creation and meme destruction based on the psychological, intellectual, social and spiritual needs of the followers and the narcissistic needs of the charismatic religious leader. The degree to which the members influence the social evolution of the new religious movement and its leader is unknown. Perhaps, in the future a sociological longitudinal study will account for the changes new religious movements and their leaders undergo due to this process.

In summation, the lifecycle of a charismatic religious leader is placed into an ideal model. The result of primary narcissism experienced by the child is seen in the adult. (Oakes, 1997) Baby worship along with the expectation of godlike behavior becomes adult worship with expectations of godlike behavior. (Oakes, 1997) The followers compel the charismatic leader to conform to their godlike ideal of leadership. If the leader is resistant to adjusting to the needs of its followers the leader will suffer losses in its following. (Oakes, 1997) The predominant memes in this process will mold the group and ultimately define the new religious movement's ideals and purpose. (Blackmore, 1999)

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Jesus at Disneyland or Spiritual Innovation: The Enmeshment of Consumer Culture and U.S. Evangelical Religious Practices

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Feverishness is the condition of an institution that has ceased to be faithful to its origins. It is then caught up in a restless, cosmopolitan hunting after new and ever newer things (Guinness, 1993: 63).

Abstract

The role of consumer culture in shaping modern society is a longstanding focus of social scientists. The impact of consumer culture, however, has only recently become a focus of scholarly studies of religion. In particular, research on consumer culture and evangelical churches is limited. In this paper, we will provide an exploratory examination of U.S. evangelical churches as a sociological case study in new consumerist forms of religion, especially the Church Growth Movement.

Introduction

The role of consumption in shaping modern societies is a longstanding concern of scholars, especially in the social sciences. The impact of consumer culture on religion has also received some attention in scholarly studies of religion. In this paper, the unique context of U.S. evangelical churches will be analyzed as a sociological case study to explore the significant, unheralded, and commonly misunderstood impact of consumption on the modern evangelical religious enterprise. One would expect that evangelical churches, as a form of moral association, would typically oppose the incorporation of elements of consumer culture. Many evangelical churches and denominations, however, have embraced this paradigm as a model for organizational success. The emergence of these new social structures has received limited research attention, especially in the social context of contemporary evangelical churches. We will explore several "consumer culture-religion" linkages, such as consumerist views of religious experience, the Church Growth Movement (CGM), and New Paradigm churches.

The growing emphasis, especially in megachurches, on efficiency, predictability, calculability, the substitution of "nonhuman" technology, and attempts to control uncertainty reflect the basic tenets of McDonaldization (Ritzer, 2008). These structural features represent a unique juxtaposition of commercial and spiritual values in modern American religion (Drane, 2001; Watson and Scalen, 2008). Peter Berger (2005), a noted sociologist of religion, detailed the new currency of a consumer-based model in contemporary religious culture. In an article entitited, "Religion and the West," Berger observed:

> In America, the term "religious preference" - tellingly derived from the language of consumer economics - has become part of the common discourse... Further-more, both in Europe and in America, there are large numbers of people who pick and choose from the religious traditions available on the market. Sociologists on both continents have noted and studied this…"patchwork religion" (Berger, 2005:112).

Consumerism and Consumer Culture

The transition to "consumer society" emerged after World War II and was made famous by scholars such as Marcuse, Galbraith, Packard, and Baudrillard, according to Sassatelli (2007). Social structures shaped by consumerism represent a signification variant of capitalism due to the primacy of consumption over production. The use of selected objects and symbols serve as a source of identity and influence on social relations for individuals in American society impacted by rapid social change and globalization (Lury, 2011). While there is considerable debate about the influence of consumerism on contemporary social structures, it is clear that the influence of material culture is increasingly important as daily life is routinely impacted by market-mediated social relationships (Sassateli, 2007). This phenomena is increasingly global in scope; this emergence of consumer culture was noted by British journalist Brian Appleyard in his 1993 article aptly titled, "Shopping Around for Salvation: The New Religion is Consumerism and Massive Malls are its Cathedrals. Let Us Bow Our Heads and Pay" (Appleyard, 1993). Globalization has rapidly expanded all forms of consumer culture beyond North America. The full impact of the expansion of consumer culture on the social order of modern societies is not yet fully understood and may lead to unintended consequences (Lury, 2011).

In her book, *Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture,* sociologist Juliet Schor describes American society's obsession with consumption. She claimed, "the architects of this culture, the companies that make, market, and advertise consumer products, have set their sights on children." (Schor, 2004:13) She argued that these companies' marketing efforts are reaping huge dividends in terms of corporate profits, but they are also creating a culture of consumption in which "contemporary American 'tweens' and teens have emerged as the most brand-oriented, consumer-involved, and materialistic generations in history" (Schor, 2004:25).

In an essay entitled *Consumerism and the New Capitalism*, author Rip Cronk claims "the traditional cultural values of Western society are degenerating under the influences of corporate politics, the commercialization of culture and the impact of mass media" (Cronk, 1996:1). He believes that consumerism is systematically stripping away major traditions and cultural heritage. He writes that the public is conditioned to "fetishistically substitute consumer ideals for lost acculturating experiences of art, religion, and family" (Cronk, 1996:1). Emerging consumerist culture has normalized manipulation and duplicity and diminished human freedom. He further writes, "as we become acclimated to life around the television set, collectively striving for a media-produced image, our choices are made for us...choice is reduced to brand name...consumerism, like communism and fascism, is a secular religion restricting freedom of choice" (Cronk, 1996:3).

Conservative Evangelicals, Church Growth, and Consumer Culture

Many observers of U.S. religious life have noted the rise of religious consumerism (e.g., Miller 2005; Ritzer 2008), though there is a lack of detailed empirical studies on the social processes associated with commodification. It can be argued that most modern religious organizations - regardless of faith tradition - are deeply influenced and shaped by a well-developed consumer culture. For this paper, evangelical churches were selected as a "case study" of the complex relationship and interaction between religion and consumer culture (Thornburg and Knottnerus, 2008).

Few scholars disagree that production and consumption are fundamental to human society. The dominance of a cultural mindset related to consumerism redefines the value of

individuals in terms of material success, status, and branded products (Lury, 2011). The late Catholic scholar Richard John Neuhaus defined consumerism as "living in a manner that is measured by having rather than being" (Neuhaus, 1992:52-53). This perspective mirrors the view of Pope John Paul II, expressed in the Second Vatican Council, that consumerism is a "threat to the freedom of the human person to live according to the higher demands of love rather than to the lower pull of material desires" (De Souza, 1999:1).

History of the Church Growth Movement

We will now examine the CGM as a new consumerist religious social structure. One might argue that the moneychangers in the Jewish temple in Jesus' day and the sale of indulgences prior to the Reformation are evidence that consumerism has always been connected to the practice of Christianity (Scalen and Watson, 2008). In the contemporary era, however, it is indisputable that the CGM has impacted the expansion of consumer religion, especially in doctrinally conservative evangelical Protestant churches. The rise of the Purpose Driven and or Seeker Sensitive models of church organization emerged in the 1990's, though the foundational ideas that drive these models were developed ten to twenty years earlier (Scalen and Watson, 2008).

The roots of the modern CGM can be found in the work and writings of a missionary and seminary professor named Donald McGavaran. In 1955, McGavaran published a book entitled, *The Bridges of God* in which he introduced his concept of cultural "contextualism" (McGavaran, 1955). He observed that missionaries to Africa fashioned their church buildings after the architectural models from their home countries. He felt that this was not only a dysfunctional approach to mission efforts, but also disrespectful to other cultures. He proposed that mission efforts make cultural accommodations in order to better connect with target populations. McGavaran felt that missionaries were imposing an alien culture on those they were ministering to and that they should frame their message in the context of the local cultures. He also emphasized practical and quantifiable indicators of the results of mission work.

In 1965, McGavaran was invited to Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena California to establish the School of World Missions. In 1970, McGavaran and Peter Wagner wrote *Understanding Church Growth,* which is considered to be a mainstay in church growth circles. Interestingly, Rick Warren later received his Doctorate of Ministry from Fuller Theological Seminary. Also, Robert Schuller and his Crystal Cathedral are only a short distance from Fuller, both of which are in the Los Angeles area. In the same year (1970) that McGavaran and Wagner published their book on church growth, Schuller founded the Robert H. Schuller Institute for Successful Church Leadership. The Institute claims more than 20,000 graduates from various Protestant and Catholic denominations, including megachurch pastors Rick Warren and Bill Hybels. In 2008, New *Yorker Magazine* observed that that Dr. Schuller's ministry is the "phenomenon" behind today's megachurch movement. Schuller has also publicly claimed to be the father of the modern CGM (Mann, 2007). Despite the contributions of McGavaran, Wagner, Schuller, Hybels, and others, Rick Warren seems to be the most visible figure in the media, often portrayed as the architect of the contemporary megachurch and "America's Pastor" (Scalen and Watson, 2008).

A Primer on the Growth of New Paradigm Churches

Bill Hybels founded Willowcreek Community Church in 1975 in suburban Chicago and Rick Warren founded Saddleback Community Church in 1980 (McIntosh, and Engle, 2004). By the early 1990's, both congregations had experienced explosive growth and had become the models for thousands of other churches that wanted the same results.

Saddleback and Willowcreek became church growth meccas, as thousands of pastors and church leaders traveled to their "campuses" to be instructed in the methods and techniques that produced their great "success." By the mid-1990's, megachurch "wannabees" were expanding, not just in the United States but all over the world. It is hard to find a U.S. church anywhere that has not been "transitioned" in some way towards the New Paradigm model; especially in evangelical circles, traditional church patterns have almost disappeared.

What are the essential elements of the New Paradigm church, and why is it perhaps the most consumerist religious organization ever created? First and foremost, it is based on a business model. Rick Warren has often referred to business management guru Peter Drucker as his principal mentor. In a 2005 interview with *Fortune Magazine,* Warren noted that Drucker "honed into me hundreds of one-liners and taught me that growth always comes from the outside-from people who are not now using your product, or listening to your message, or using your services" (Kroll. 2003:1). In other words, if one wants to grow a church, one must appeal to potential consumers or customers. One must know their interests, their preferences, and their "likes" and "dislikes." One's products and services must be carefully crafted and designed to target a desired market; this is a fundamental principle of consumerism. One must effectively appeal to potential customers in order to successfully market the product. In this context, the product is the "sacred packaged with the profane."

The connection to the concept of cultural contextualism becomes largely self-evident in this process of transition to a New Paradigm model. If one wants to attract potential customers, one must connect with their everyday cultural experiences. How do they spend their time, what do they value, what do they want? In American pop culture, Americans like to shop. Why not have a mall in your church? Consumers favor various forms of entertainment, so churches provide entertainment-focused services and youth programs. They want "interesting" activities for their children, so churches design Disney-style quality children programs and updated facilities. In other words, "find out what people want and give it to them so your church will grow." With growth in membership, New Paradigm churches have additional economic resources to attract more members, increase market share, and so on. New Paradigm church leaders may also ask: what could possibly be wrong with this type of "success"? The conclusion is that, "the ends justify the means and church is a business like any other" - or is it (Guinness, 1993)?

Critics of these methods claim that this approach misses the very "heart" of Christianity (Guinness, 2003); the basic tenets of Christianity are not a product to be "sold" by any means available. Furthermore, New Paradigm approaches that involve the wholesale imitation of a culture can be viewed as lacking proper discernment. An examination of this issue from a theological perspective may assist in highlighting the contradictions of the New Paradigm model. What elements of the culture are inconsistent with traditional Christian culture? The teachings of Christ and the Apostles are a set of values and standards - a way of life. Theologically, this would be to say that the Christian Church must distinguish between that which is of the "Kingdom" and that which is "of the world." Apostle Paul, however, wrote in First Corinthians 9:22: "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means might save some." Does this mean that, when it comes to evangelism, "anything goes?" Wrenched out of context, this may be one interpretation, but Paul also wrote in First Thessalonians 5:22 that Christians should "abstain from any appearance of evil." To believe that American pop culture is morally neutral is the height of naivete (Guinness, 1993). Where does one find theological support for the church as a commercial enterprise? Didn't Jesus upon driving out the moneychangers from the temple declare Matthew 21:13, "you have made my house into a place of merchandise, but my house will be called a house of prayer" (passages from *NIV Bible*, 1984).

Sociologically, religious institutions in American society have a history of building schools, orphanages, hospitals, and meeting the needs of immigrants (Olasky, 2008). Church leaders have often been driven by what they perceived as "just" causes, such as the abolition of slavery and prison reform. In all fairness, some New Paradigm churches do emphasize service, but many such churches appear principally focused on their own facilities and institutional self-preservation, including adding amenities, and staying on the cutting edge of technology, which is enormously expensive (versus a focus on social concerns). The emphasis on cutting-edge programming, new technology, and ever-expanding amenities are essential to a consumerist approach to religion - what we have chosen to term "consumer religion."

A Brief Look Inside New Paradigm Churches

What is the main goal of the CGM, and what does a typical New Paradigm church look like? Considering their emphasis on cultural contextualism, it is surprising, perhaps even shocking as to how stereotypical New Paradigm churches are organized (Scalen and Watson, 2008). One would expect each church to conform to the unique set of cultural practices common to their geographical area, but this is not always the case. The authors have visited a large number of these churches in both large cities and small towns, and have also reviewed the web sites of America's largest churches. Repeatedly, a redundant "sameness" was the consistent finding. They look alike, sound alike, and feel alike. Their facilities commonly look like corporate headquarters; they are obsessed with coffee, entertainment, and cutting-edge technology. They have built in shopping malls, food courts, fitness centers, and other amenities. They have greeters that recite predictable scripts. There is a complete absence of anything traditional or "religious." There are typically no traditional religious symbols, art, quotations, rituals, or customs. Based on field observations (of the co-authors), many New Paradigm churches seem bent on stripping away any vestige of with historical Christianity.

Of course, the major explanation for these changes is largely because megachurch "wannabees" typically model their churches after America's largest churches, such as Saddleback Community Church in California and Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago, Illinois. *The Guardian*, a British newspaper, published an article describing a visit to Saddleback Church in suburban Los Angeles; it was not complimentary. Its author, University of San Diego Philosophy Professor Harriet Baber, pointed out that megachurches are market-driven. They study demographic data and develop marketing schemes directed at their local target audiences. Baber concluded that Saddleback's target audience must "have an insatiable appetite for therapy and self-improvement…as Saddleback offers a generic "Celebrate Recovery" program and customized support groups for "ADD Adults, Diabetics in God, Families with Incarcerated Loved Ones" and "victims of other ills." Baber described the physical plant as an obvious attempt to copy "shopping malls and office parks" and avoid anything perceived as traditional. She described Warren's sermon as a plan for "spiritual growth" designed to set people free from "habits, hurts, and hang-ups…from painful memories, worry, bitterness and guilt" (Baber, 2010:1).

Baber also lamented that the future of American Christianity may involve a division between secular liberals and secular evangelicals. In her view, this is altogether negative news since secular liberals are hostile to religious belief and evangelical Christianity is religiously vacuous. Saddleback, as the model for New Paradigm churches, is religion for people who don't like religion. "Transcendence is not on the menu," Baber (2010:1) noted. She concluded:

> As a navel-gazer, I was depressed by Saddleback. It seemed to be the butt end of Christianity: stripped of history and iconography, wholly immersed in its secular surroundings, constructed according to a business model and promoted by motivational speakers, bland, cheerful, dull (Baber, 2010:1).

The observations above are consistent with our qualitative observations of New Paradigm churches. Interestingly, one of the common oft-repeated mantras at New Paradigm churches is that Christianity is not a religion but a "relationship." These churches have devised effective methods with a seemingly inexhaustible emphasis on relationships. This mantra is usually accompanied by a stereotypical caricature of traditional religion as legalistic, joyless, dull, and boring. The "hip and trendy" version of the New Paradigm church is the antithesis of this: it is fun, exciting, and even glamorous. Baber is right that New Paradigm churches reflect a negative bias against traditional religion. What exactly are these bias rooted in?

Most scholarly definitions of religion emphasize common elements. For example, a virtually universal and general definition of religion would be a set of symbols and ideas that focus on the meaning of life and the nature of the unknown (Roberts and Yamane, 2012). In addition, most religions have a belief in the supernatural, a set of valued rituals, and sacred observances. Furthermore, religions usually have associated prophetic writings, sacred scriptures, or some form of written revelation. Most religions emphasize a life of discipline and morality and make a distinction between the sacred versus the ordinary, common, and profane. Religion is typically transferred to new generations through a series of teachings or catechisms, and ancient traditions are highly valued. Most historians and other scholars have noted the survival of Christianity as a religious system for almost two thousand years. Some observers, however, have pointed to the CGM, with its emphasis on "all things have been made new" as a qualitative historical shift whereby cultural relevance now trumps traditional theological beliefs (Miller, 2005; Watson and Scalen, 2008).

There is little doubt that the church growth gurus and their millions of followers are certain that: (1) they have only changed the "methods but not the message;" (2) that they have done no harm; (3) that they have improved evangelical Christianity - made it more approachable, friendly and attractive. CGM leaders are likely sincere in their belief that they have done no major harm or damage, that "Christ is thrilled with their work," and "the bottom line vindicates their efforts." Their critics claim, however, that they have marred the face of evangelical Christianity beyond recognition - they have created the worldly Laodicean church that Jesus condemned. Perhaps the truth is somewhere in between. One will search in vain to find anything in the history of the Christian Church remotely similar to New Paradigm churches. Christian churches have sometimes been corrupt, but never this essentially different from their historical predecessors.

Conclusions and Implications

British Protestant Theologian John Drane, in his book, *The McDonaldization of the Church* (2001) noted a fundamental shift in some western churches towards an emphasis on new forms of religious authority based on "personal individual experience" and "a pre-packaged McDonaldized religious product" (Drane, 2001:208-209). Clearly, this observation is applicable to the New Paradigm churches that we have described here. Interestingly, a cursory examination (by the co-authors) of recently published books by the largest evangelical publishers, and monthly trade publications for ministers such as *Christianity Today* suggests that there is little debate or attention given to this potential shift in American

religion among conservative evangelicals. Additionally, there are few scholarly studies on the interrelationship of consumer culture and religion, and the role of specific causal mechanisms linking consumer culture and its accelerating impact on U.S. religious life (Scalen and Watson, 2008; Roberts and Yamane, 2012). The potential usefulness of such research efforts was well-articulated by Mark Chaves in a discussion of contemporary trends in American religion: "…people who do not care about American religious institutions for their own sake still might be concerned about the hollowing out of religious beliefs and practices…Despite continuing high levels of religious belief… religious institutions may or not find ways for people to express their religiosity…to the same extent as in the past (Chaves, 2011:112-113). The extent to which consumerist forms of religion, then, may reduce the social capital commonly associated with religious institutions is an important empirical question for researchers (Putnam and Campbell, 2010).

Furthermore, the observation of sociologist Daniel Bell (1996) - that late capitalist society has shifted from a cultural desire for self-denial to self-gratification - is particularly relevant to this discussion. We suggest that this cultural shift to self-gratification is at the core of the New Paradigm church model. The possibility that consumerist forms of modern religion may further accelerate the privatization of religion represents a topic for further research, especially by social scientists. For example, Ellingsen argues "the privatizing of religion logically connects with Warren's concept of and concentration on the purpose of individuals" (2009:118), a reference to Warren's purpose driven model. Additional evidence of this cultural emphasis was recently noted by Baber (2011), who suggested that evangelical churches increasingly resemble self-help groups and promote a type of "therapeutic gospel":

> …the better class of evangelical preachers these days - those who aim to attract a more upscale clientele to their suburban megachurches - don't say much about salvation. Like the secular self-help gurus, they promise personal growth, "recovery" and other this-worldly benefits. But the message is the same: it's all about you. The church provides you with uplift, recipes for successful living, community, consolation, and encouragement - to meet your needs and satisfy your wants (Baber, 2011:1).

As we have noted elsewhere, the growing influence of these consumerist forms of religion, as represented by the CGM and New Paradigm church models, represent a hidden form of secularization paradoxically embraced by some conservative evangelical churches (Scalen and Watson, 2008). Whether consumer religious forms will increase or contract in the American religious landscape is an additional question for further research. Swenson, for example, noted "a religion adapting to the secular world to increase its 'market share' of the religious economy does not necessarily lead to the demise of religion…"(Swensen, 2009: 361). Secularization in this context may thus operate as a delimiting process (Chaves, 2011). The prediction of religious change in society is an imprecise enterprise, but clearly, scholars of Religious Studies will find ample opportunities to conduct qualitative and quantitative studies to examine the growth of "Jesus at Disneyland" (consumer religion) and its influence on lived religious experience. Finally, there is a need to study counter movements to the CGM and other forms of consumer religion. What are the social, cultural, and theological arguments marshaled by opponents? Religious studies scholars, for example might wish to examine the social and theological elements underlying this response recently noted on a "Pastor's Blog":

> …this might be the most troubling reason behind all the changes: the belief that we are smarter and more spiritually in-tune than the saints who preceded us. Is the question ever asked: "How come Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Edwards, Spurgeon, and Lloyd-Jones didn't do that?" (Hamlin, 2011).

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Messages from Heaven: A Research Study on Spiritualist Ministers and their "Calling" to Serve Spirit

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Introduction

On March 31, 1848, two sisters in rural upstate New York made contact with a disincarnate entity through a simple system of "raps" to which it responded in kind. This incident became known as the "Hydesville Rappings." What began as a seemingly innocent game by these young country girls, Maggie and Katie Fox—to tease the spirit they had affectionately named "Mr. Splitfoot"—set into motion a religious movement that would have far-reaching and widespread influence affecting not only those around them in their tiny hamlet, but also throughout the United States and beyond. Once news spread about the rappings, this event forever changed the way people who were associated with the movement viewed religion, death, and spirit communication; it literally shook to the very core many people's basic beliefs and ideas about the possibility of life after death.

The Spiritualist movement eventually became the "religion" of Spiritualism as more and more people sought the counsel of mediums to make contact with loved ones who had crossed over to the other side. Associations were formed, camp-style meetings were organized, and churches were founded. With this new religion came the prerequisite need for "ministers" who could lead and serve the growing legions of people who were embracing in droves this new religion. In the beginning, the movement relied heavily upon the mediums that practiced the gift of mediumship, but had no formal training in doing the "work of God" as was so narrowly defined by the other more established, mainstream religions. It soon became evident that clergy were needed to represent the religion properly and to serve and promote the Gospel of Spiritualism professionally and informatively. Gradually, associations around the country began to regulate the ministerial aspects of the movement which served to organize the new religion in much the same manner as other traditional Christian denominations had done before it.

Spiritualism bases its entire belief system on the idea that people do not die, bodies do, with the spirit of the person continuing on in another dimension, waiting patiently for a chance to make contact with those left behind. Spirit communication is at the center of Spiritualism with Spiritualists placing their belief in the hands of a medium's ability to commune with entities that have passed over to the other side. In order to be accepted socially and by other organized religions, then, Spiritualist clergy were needed and hence had to be trained with some system of authorization required which sanctioned them to preside over life's rituals that obliged some sort of legal recognition (*e.g.* the rites of marriage, christenings,[1] funerals, *etc*), as well as to pastor those who were following the

[1] Strictly speaking, Spiritualism does not use the term "christening" as it tends to have a very Christian meaning but instead prefers to use the term "dedication of a child" which has no specific religious connotation.

religion as a "congregation." Although all Spiritualist ministers are, in effect, mediums, not all mediums are ministers. To solve this dilemma, an organized system had to be created to systematize the religion which would utilize ordained ministers; as more and more new Spiritualist associations began to form, allowing likeminded Spiritualists to meet and worship in the religion together, pastoral figures were needed as clergy.

From its earliest beginnings, Spiritualism was categorically against becoming "churchified" in the same way Christian denominations were formed and conducted. It prided itself as being different, encouraging members to be "free thinkers;" permitting its membership to follow personal truths from any religious tradition (and not merely following the stodgy belief systems that preached hell and damnation); and disavowing certain religious beliefs common in many mainstream Christian denominations while allowing a more flexible, if not liberal, interpretation of the Bible, even going as far as allowing women to serve as ministers in the Spiritualist clergy.

When Spiritualism first appeared as a religion, it appealed to a number of people who were exasperated with mainstream religion. This new religion offered believers not only alleged proof of life after death, but a belief system that incorporated the ideals and truths from a variety of the world's religions. It also allowed women to play a prominent role in religion—a position most nearly always denied by the more fundamentalist-based religions of the day.[2]

Not long after the Fox sisters made their alleged "spirit contact," legions of people became fascinated with the idea of talking to the other side. This occurred at a time when the United States was experiencing spiritual growing pains, with a number of new movements popping up around the Eastern seaboard. People were searching for new and less constricting belief systems, while questioning many of the Puritanical rules that controlled their lives (which had been the norm for centuries). The fact that spirit communication was even remotely possible changed all prior held beliefs concerning entrenched and undisputed teachings of mainstream religions—the prospect of a new religion that was based on Natural Law and spirit communication, with undertones of a philosophy and science, and that which denied original sin, vicarious atonement, the physical resurrection of Jesus, as well as preaching positively about the redemption of all people no matter how sinful they were, appealed to a growing number of citizens who had grown tired of the fire and brimstone sermons of mainstream religions.

Spiritualism is one of only a few religions that was not "imported" to the United States, but instead was "exported" to other parts of the world. Early on, it made its way to Great Britain where it flourished. It eventually spread to other countries in Europe, Australia, and even to South and Central America, but it never did reach the masses outside the United States like Mormonism or Christian Science did—two other American-made religions that were exported from the shores of the United States.[3]

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[2] For statistics regarding female clergy in Christian-based denominations, see Appendix A.

[3] It is interesting to note that these "American-made" religions all have their roots in upstate New York and were founded within decades of one another. One reason why Spiritualism failed to take hold as firmly as Mormonism and Christian Science is that from the beginning it was not an evangelical religion. It did not actively try to recruit adherents through missionary means. Also, both Mormonism

Interestingly, however, many newly converted adherents to the Spiritualist movement brought with them many of the ingrained ideas of their own Christian religious traditions, trying to fuse the belief systems of their childhood with that of the new religion. In essence, Spiritualists did end up becoming "churchified" to a large extent even though it was their explicit desire not to do so. This had much to do with what people were used to in their religious upbringings and while some aspects could be viewed differently, it was just more comfortable and familiar for people to follow a system they knew and understood. This was of no matter, because the modest mediumship of the Fox sisters had exploded into a full-fledged religion called "Spiritualism."

Gradually, as more and more people claimed to be connected to and able to communicate with the spirit world, self-proclaimed mediums were suddenly holding living room séances from coast to coast. From the very initial stages of the Spiritualist movement, however, self-enrichment sometimes became a motivating factor for a number of the mediums who soon began charging for their spiritual services. All of this served to muddle what was indeed genuine from what was mere fakery and deception.

Initially, the idea of this new religion was to be void of dogma, church tenets, creeds and doctrines. As mentioned earlier, people were to be "free thinkers" accepting the truths from all religious traditions and sacred texts, allowing a free flowing of ideas and beliefs to transpire. It was not long, though, until infighting began to occur and it became painfully clear that some type of organization had to be implemented in order for the movement to develop fully. Several independent Spiritualist-based organizations began cropping up, making it increasingly difficult to manage. Added to this is the fact that in the very early days, mediums were basically itinerant preachers who traveled from city to city to give tent demonstrations of mediumship via messages in the form of mental and physical phenomena.[4] Since many early Spiritualists had been Christians, many leaned toward organizing the movement using a Christian-model (*i.e.* churches, services, use of the Holy Bible, hymns, *etc*).

Critics and cavilers abounded as the movement started to gain momentum. Mainstream churches were losing parishioners to Spiritualism, and they were not about to give up without a fight. Many of these critics attempted to tie Spiritualism to the work of Satan, trying to instill fear and guilt into those who were following the new religion's teachings. Regardless of the criticism by nonbelievers, and even being aware of the potential for fraud by charlatan mediums, people swarmed to Spiritualist meetings and the movement grew in leaps and bounds. The young movement boasted millions of followers in the early 1850s, just a few years after the Fox sisters' revelation. This is all the more amazing when considering the population of the United States at the time was just around 30 million. (Buescher, xi)

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and Christian Science were formed around cult figures (Joseph Smith for Mormonism and Mary Baker-Eddy for Christian Science). Spiritualism, as a movement, was not nearly as organized and as a result, the "religion" aspect of it took much longer to organize and develop.

[4] Mental mediumship involves the gifts of prophecy, clairvoyance, clairsentience, clairaudience, clairgustance, psychometry, trance, inspirational speaking and writing, and spiritual healing. Physical mediumship includes materializations, transfiguration, direct voice, and *apports* (physical objects materializing from the ethers by spirit guides or loved ones for sitters).

> …the New England Spiritualists Association estimated the number of spiritualists[5] in the United States as 2 million, and *The North American Review* gave its opinion that the figure was reasonable. The *Spiritual Register*, a popular annual serial compiled by spiritualists, estimated the number of spiritualists in 1860 as 1,600,000 but suggested that the number of nominal believers was 5 million.[6] (Buescher, x)

Integral to Spiritualism, though, was the medium—a person sensitive to the vibration of spirit entities who can sense through a variety of means intuitive visions, feelings, sounds or voices, and smells, interpreting these as messages by those on the other side to those on the earth plane. Mediums and mediumship, in many aspects, have come a long way since the early days of the Spiritualist movement when anyone could claim to be a Spiritualist medium. A spiritualist medium today, one that is board certified and thoroughly tested, goes through a rigorous course of study including (but not inclusive of) Spiritualism's history, belief system, and notable personas associated with the movement; metaphysical training; the Bible (as well as other sacred texts); healing; public speaking; platform decorum; ministerial ethics, and most importantly, perhaps, mediumship unfoldment and development. A percentage of these mediums then pursue ordination to become full-fledged ministers, legally permitted to perform weddings, christenings, and funerals.

Ordinarily, becoming an ordained Spiritualist minister requires dedication, commitment and perseverance just as it does in all other mainstream denominations. The process that Spiritualist organizations require people to complete in order to become ordained ministers (*e.g.* as identified by existing Spiritualist associations today, most notably the *National Spiritualist Association of Churches* (NSAC), the *Indiana Association of Spiritualists* (IAOS), the *Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Meeting Association* (SCSCMA), or the *Universal Spiritualist Association* (USA)), vary in scope and effort in order to complete the program.[7]

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[5] Some authors always keep "spiritualist" and "spiritualism" in the lowercase. This author has consistently capitalized it throughout this study just as one would use the uppercase for "Christianity," "Buddhism," or "Judaism."

[6] Since Spiritualism was not yet organized into a denominational religion (in that churches and ministries were formed offering some semblance of an organization and body to the movement), a number of people maintained their own religious traditions outwardly, but practiced and/or participated in spirit communication in private. For these reasons, it is impossible to know exactly how many adherents there actually were at the time. Even today, the real number of practicing Spiritualists is at best misleading in that there are a number of people who do not openly subscribe to Spiritualism, but in private are quite open and receptive to its beliefs and practices (*i.e.* those who seek guidance and counsel from a medium in the form of a reading, attending séances and healing circles, and believing in spirit communication through personal, experiential instances that lead people not to deny categorically the plausibility of spirit communication). I found in my research that people are a bit hesitant and even embarrassed to admit that they believe in spirit communication for fear of being labeled unkindly by those who do not believe—a form of spiritual bullying, of sorts.

[7] Lake Pleasant, Massachusetts was home to the largest of the 19th century Spiritualist camps; established in 1874 with tents, it grew rapidly and by 1890 had "500 cottages, a grocery store, and a hotel, and offered band concerts, dancing, and refreshment stands as well as a variety of mediums, fortune tellers, magnetic and electric healers, and inspirational Sunday lectures." (Guthrie, *et al*, 17) It is important to note that by far the most renowned of these organizations was the NSAC located in Lily Dale, New York (known earlier as the Cassadaga Lake Free Association and renamed "Lily Dale"

For instance, some associations like the IAOS offer an actual seminary program that meets several times a year for weeklong classes and a number of times a year that have extended weekend classes that students are required to complete over a period of several years, incorporating fieldwork and community service in order to become ordained by the IAOS. Other organizations, such as the NSAC have a distance program called the "Morris Pratt Institute" that offers certain courses, as well as allowing their sanctioned churches to train and mentor students in the ministry; when the officiating clergy feels the student is ready, then he/she is then ordained as a minister by that particular affiliated church.

Aspiring ministers who wish to be ordained by an accredited Spiritualist organization generally must complete an extensive mediumship developmental program, as well as a battery of tests given in stages throughout the study course—both written and oral in the form of evidential demonstrations of mediumship. First, the novice medium must enroll in and successfully complete a specified number of classes related to Spiritualism, mediumship, and the ministry. Second, the aspiring minister must participate in message services, séances, and church services to demonstrate his/her platform work.[8] This serves as a type of "apprenticeship" in that older, more seasoned mediums and ministers will often critique the novice's work, style and ability, commenting on the presentation and accuracy of the message. In addition, the elder ministers will offer suggestions and advice on how to improve the aspiring minister's ability to give messages more clearly and accurately, as well as to critique the student's style and ability in giving sermons and service related prayers. Third, the novice medium must give messages in the form of genuine spirit communication as a type of evidential testing to a panel of sitters who are all certified mediums (the majority of whom are usually ordained ministers); this is to ensure that the aspiring minister is indeed making actual spirit contact. The members on the panel will judge the novice's ability based on whether or not he/she is able to give messages that can be confirmed definitively by the panel (*e.g.* a name of a loved one in spirit and/or a description as well as a message that a panel member can recognize and concretely identify).

As a rule, this process takes at the very least several years to complete. During this period of time, the novice studies about Spiritualism, esoteric studies, in addition to developmental and unfoldment classes which serve to instruct the aspiring minister on how

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in 1879); the IAOS was formed in 1886 in Chesterfield, Indiana and is affectionately known as "Camp Chesterfield" by the locals; the SCSCMA originally was created as a winter retreat for the northern Spiritualists escaping the harsh winters of New York and Massachusetts and was established in 1894; the USA no longer has a Spiritualist camp of its own (it did have a camp at one time called "Maple Grove," but it is no longer in use) as it was an offshoot of the IAOS, being established in 1956. The USA is unique in that it was the first to modernize, embracing modern technology (like the internet) to reach more people; it developed the first on-line ordination and certification system by distance learning with a yearly residence session at its annual symposium (today, it is mostly inactive). The Morris Pratt Institute, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, offers courses by distance study (it is affiliated with the NSAC, its parent organization). (Leonard (b), 2005)

[8] "Platform work" refers to the medium standing in front of the congregation for the purpose of giving messages from the spirit world to those in attendance. This term most likely has its roots in the old days when Spiritualists traveled the countryside as itinerant mediums and ministers, standing on a raised platform to do their work. This is a common phrase used by Spiritualists when referring to doing a message service.

to develop not only his/her mediumship skills, but how to hone them. They also learn practical aspects of mediumship involving outside tools that can aid them more readily in connecting them with spirit (*i.e.* astrology, tarot, numerology, *etc*), in addition to pastoral related classes which serve to prepare the student for the ministry. Throughout the course of their studies, aspiring ministers are required to take periodic written exams comprising the material they studied up to that point.[9]

During the developmental phase of mediumship, often novices are assigned a certified medium who acts as a mentor in guiding and advising the aspiring mediums. After successfully completing this course of study, the novices are assigned various duties to not only further their mediumship skills, but also to familiarize them with the workings of the church service and all other related aspects of being a Spiritualist medium. Throughout this tenure, the probationary medium is exposed to as many of the necessary elements of being a medium as possible, therefore gaining valuable experience in the process. Upon completion of the "apprenticeship" and testing, the novice medium is then formally allowed to practice as a Spiritualist medium, endorsed by the parent organization that certified him/her, complete with papers suitable for framing.

At this point in their mediumship, they can then decide if they wish to study further to become an ordained Spiritualist minister, which normally requires (in the case of a seminary program like the IAOS offers) a number of advanced classes and pastoral/minister related classes (in addition to sermon work, message and fieldwork) to become ordained ministers. Also, it must be noted that many who begin to study towards ordination often do not complete their studies once the rigors of what it takes to be an ordained minister is realized. Just as in other traditional Christian denominations, the idea of a "calling" to serve God as a pastor should be paramount in a person's decision to continue their studies to completion and ordination.

This particular research study[10] focuses upon this concept of receiving a "calling" to become a Spiritualist minister in God's service. In addition, the purposes of this study were to determine whether modern Spiritualist ministers were raised in the religion, or actually converted to it from another, more mainstream religion; and if so, what relative factors existed which prompted them to serve the religion of Spiritualism as a minister? This paper addresses these questions as well as presents data in the form of graphs to illustrate visually modern trends among Spiritualist ministers and their mediumship.

A detailed fieldwork questionnaire and personal interviews were conducted by this researcher for this paper. The purpose in so doing was to gather as much data as possible regarding specific backgrounds, experiences and competencies relevant to Spiritualist ministers and their work (as identified by 54 ordained Spiritualist ministers who are currently ministering in some form).[11] Some of the topics contained in the fieldwork research included

[9] The system described in this section follows closely the educational requirements outlined by the "Chesterfield Spiritualist Seminary," the educational arm of the *Indiana Association of Spiritualists.*

[10] This study was made possible, in part, due to a partial grant awarded by Fukuoka University of Education, Munakata-shi, Fukuoka-ken, Japan.

[11] One hundred Spiritualist ministers were initially surveyed, with 62 respondents, and 54 subjects ultimately accepted in the data collection portion of this study. A number of ministers offered additional research data through consultation and interviews.

questions on the ministers' demographic and personal data, including family background; their religious upbringing and experiences prior to becoming a Spiritualist; the idea of a "calling" and when and why they actively pursued the ministry; what type of certification/ordination process they experienced; and their years of service as a minister.

The criteria for the gathered data on the mediumship of the surveyed ministers was largely based on the experiential aspects of their work as well as pertinent background information that was directly, and indirectly, related to their mediumship. To gain a broader understanding of the requirements and the duties of being a minister, information was collected on several levels, including conducting site visits, interviews, attending séances and healing circles, and attending message services at Spiritualist churches and camps; in addition, it was necessary to examine documentation and artifacts (spirit portraits, *apports*, and historic photographs of materializations) of mediums, as well as distributing, collecting, and analyzing a comprehensive questionnaire.

The purpose of this study was to determine what the present population of Spiritualist ministers' religious and spiritual backgrounds entailed, and why they decided to pursue Spiritualism as a religion, and the calling they received to the ministry as a vocation? In addition, the study endeavored to learn the process that encompasses becoming a minister. Four related studies previously published by this author aided greatly in qualifying and comparing the results with this study. Portions of the previous studies overlapped, allowing the use of previously published findings to be included in this paper. [See Leonard (a), (b), 2005, (c) 2009), and (e) 2012.]

The results of the study, which are described in the following sections, provide clear information that definitively supports the conclusions of this study focusing on the mediumship of contemporary Spiritualist ministers.

Descriptive Statistics of the Participants' Demographic Data

This study was conducted on Spiritualist ministers who either reside in Spiritualist camps, have their own churches and congregations, or who are certified members in good standing of a recognized Spiritualist association. The participants had to be ordained Spiritualist ministers in order to participate in this study. One hundred questionnaires were distributed to Spiritualist ministers using a variety of methods to contact ordained Spiritualist ministers. The majority of the subjects, however, were selected through referral, meaning that once a core group of ministers was selected through personal contacts, these people then distributed the questionnaire on to other ordained ministers with the above criterion in place. This type of research sampling is referred to as "snowball sampling."

In snowball sampling researchers identify a small number of individuals who have characteristics in which they are interested. These people are then used as informants to identify, or put researchers in touch with, others who qualify for inclusion and these, in turn, identify yet others—hence the term snowball sampling. This method is useful for sampling a population where access is difficult, maybe because it is a sensitive topic or where communication networks are underdeveloped. The task for the researcher is to establish

who are the critical or key informants with whom initial contact must be made. (Cohen, *et al*, 104)

A decision was made early on to make the study as pervasive as possible in order to extrapolate the most up-to-date and accurate data reflecting the current conditions of ordained Spiritualist ministers today. Although the primary instrument (fieldwork questionnaire) utilized a combination of a Likert scale (*e.g.* "please mark accordingly—strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree") and checklist scale (*e.g.* "please check the items that pertain to you"), several portions of the questionnaire involved more open-ended questions, generating a large amount of research data that needed to be collated and interpreted.

In retrospect, perhaps a survey that encompassed only a checklist or rating method might have made it easier to collocate and analyze the data generated, but ultimately it was decided to combine both configurations in the question design in order not to limit the subjects in their responses. Also, I could not assume to know all the possible responses that subjects might be able to provide—which certainly was the case, as many respondents mentioned areas and experiences that I would never have thought to include in a checklist or Likert format. The responses, in general, were thoughtful, lengthy, and rich with detail.

Statistics on the Gender of the Participants

The genders of the participants in this study were 70% female and 30% male. As Figure 1 illustrates, the research data shows that the religion is predominantly made up of women. Historically, this is also true from its inception. Spiritualism and spirit communication, first started by the young Fox sisters, eventually served to offer women an active voice in religion, as well as positions of authority in churches, at a time when women were largely relegated to doing housework and to raising a family. Eventually, Spiritualism would give women a vocation—a career—in which they could nurture a profession that was separate from their dependence upon any male figure (whether it be a husband, father, brother, uncle, grandfather, or son). (See Leonard (a), 2005; Leonard (b), 2005)

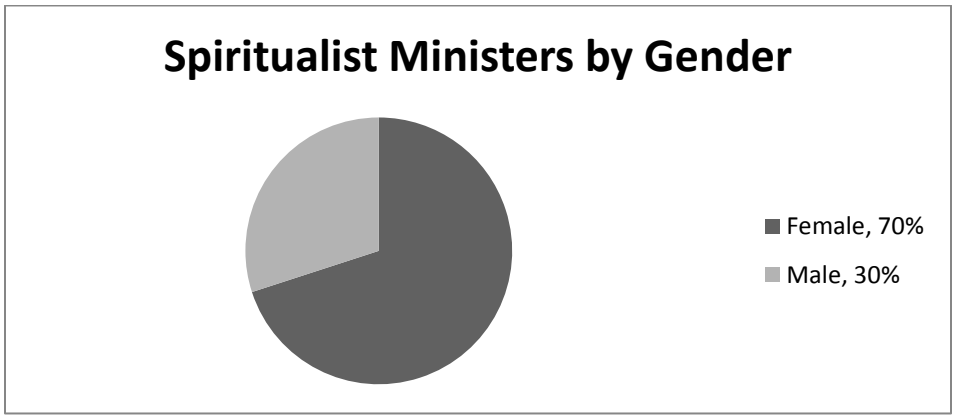
Women were expected to accept and be satisfied with secondary and subordinate roles—not only in society, but also in church leadership, church services, and even in church politics. Women were generally not allowed to preach from the pulpit, and were largely forbidden from becoming ordained. Spiritualism as a religion and belief system offered women equality by changing many of the steadfast, traditional rules that had governed women, religion, spirituality, and equality. Goldsmith (1998) points out:

Perhaps the most startling discovery was the extent to which Spiritualism and the inception of woman's rights were intertwined. At a time when women had no power to achieve equal rights, they relied on the "other powers" provided by Spiritualism to sustain their efforts. Through the mouths of trance speakers came words of wisdom from long-dead seers, and from the spirits came the courage to go forward. (xiii-xiv)

The data gathered for this study indicates that Spiritualist women still find great comfort in the religion and enjoy an equality of the sexes still denied many other women who adhere to

mainstream religions. Spiritualism boasts one of the highest percentages of female ministers in organized religion.[12] This is due in part to the fact that historically, and even today, Spiritualism not only offers women a voice, but an opportunity to be heard on equal footing with men, as well as to participate commensurately in church-related leadership roles. In most Spiritualist organizations, and in many Spiritualist churches today, women are the undeniable leaders of the religion. Also, Spiritualism still is "intertwined" with many social issues of the day, offering an alternative view to and acceptance of marginal members of society, from all races, creeds, economic and social backgrounds, and sexual orientations.

Figure 1.



Statistics on the Sexual Orientation of the Participants

Through interviews, onsite research, as well as discussions with a number of Spiritualist ministers, I encountered what seemed to be a higher than average percentage of male (and to a lesser degree, female) ordained ministers who are homosexual as compared to mainstream Christian denominations.[13] The survey indicated 72% of the respondents to be heterosexual and 28% to be gay, lesbian or bisexual.[14] Of this percent, 19% were male (gay or bisexual).

The sampling was rather limited, and because this question was not expanded upon adequately in the original questionnaire, these assumptions cannot be regarded as

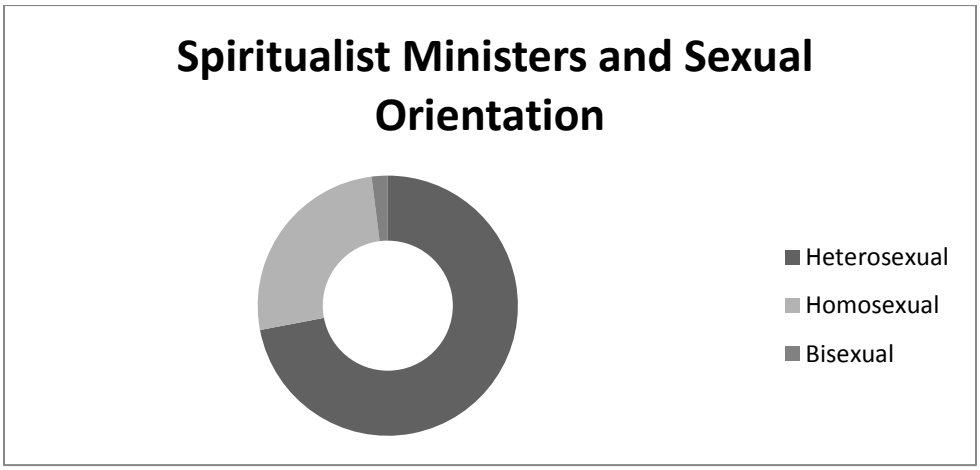
[12] See Appendix A.

[13] It is difficult to ascertain reliable statistics regarding percentages of homosexual ministers in mainstream Christian denominations because many churches condemn homosexuality so vehemently that a homosexual Christian minister cannot admit his/her homosexuality publicly. Conventional wisdom, however, would suggest that a cross-section of Christianity—which is a group or population—has roughly the same incidence of homosexuality as any other cross-section of society. The difference, however, is that a majority of gay-Christian ministers must suppress their homosexuality in order to participate in the religion; Spiritualism on the other hand embraces diversity and openly accepts homosexual ministers in its churches (which is reflected in its belief system which does not view homosexuality as sinful, but rather as another expression of love toward another human being).

[14] See Figure 2.

scientifically sound. But from the data I gathered which can be regarded as significant, it can be generally deduced, perhaps, that this trend can be loosely compared to that of women in the early days seeking out Spiritualism as an alternative to other mainstream religions: it offered no religious or spiritual restrictions based on gender or sex; hence, regarding the issue of sexual orientation, it is also a non-issue in relation to participating in and taking leadership roles in the church. (Leonard (b), 2005)

Figure 2.



The idea that Spiritualists are "free thinkers" and place no moral judgment upon the actions or personal lives of other people (this is to be worked out between the individual and God once the person makes his/her transition to the spirit world), allows homosexuals a place in which to develop and nurture their spiritual selves. Spiritualism seems to offer this stratum of modern society, just as it did for women in Victorian times, an avenue in which to practice their religion freely and openly (as homosexuals) without fear of being judged; it allows homosexuals a haven in which to worship and practice their faith, regardless of their sexual orientation.[15] Also, it is interesting to note that since the majority of ministers are women, and many of the male ministers I interviewed and spoke with were gay, it prompted me to hypothesize that "mediumship" work is somehow connected to a type of feminine energy (this is not to suggest the men are "feminine," but that perhaps the spiritual aspect

[15] This aspect of modern Spiritualism intrigued me, so I inquired further to a number of Spiritualist ministers, both homosexual and heterosexual, as to the reasons for the attraction of gays to Spiritualism and vice versa. It was pointed out to me that this was not always the case. There was a time when Spiritualist mediums and ministers (who were gay or lesbian) had to hide their sexuality from the majority, fearing they would be asked to leave the movement. Spiritualism, however, does view issues from a more progressive point of view, and usually does precede everyday society in the general acceptance of current issues and controversies. Just as Spiritualism was on the cutting edge working towards the abolition of slavery in the 1850s, and embraced women and women's rights at a time when society was fighting issues of equality with a vengeance, so does Spiritualism today embrace those searching honestly and purely for their own spiritual truth and place in society—regardless of their sexual orientation. (Leonard (b), 166)

and vibratory energy needed to make spirit contact is somehow feminine in nature). This was explained to me in the following way by a heterosexual Spiritualist minister:

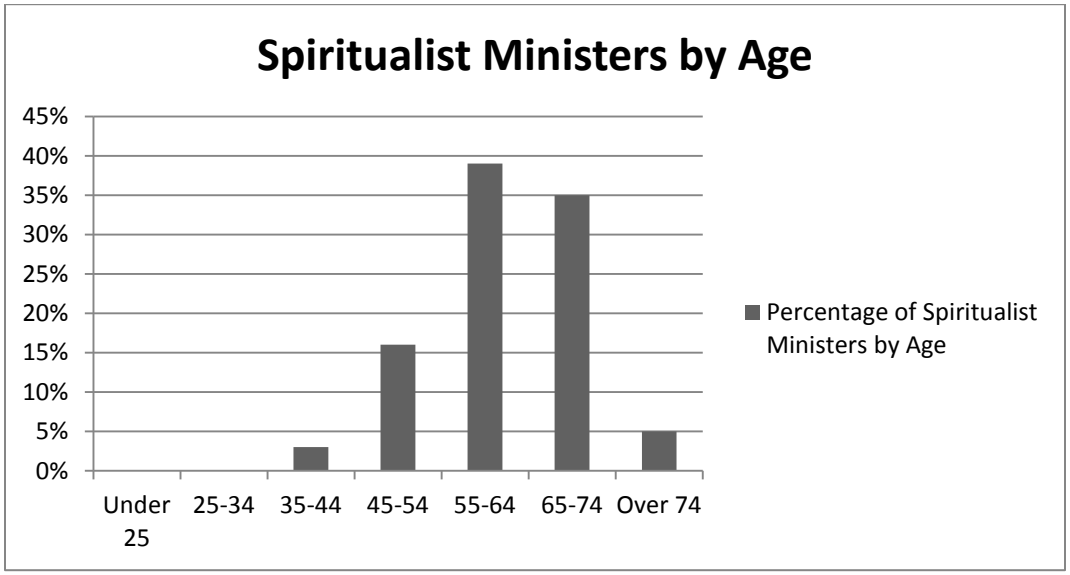
When you do this kind of work, we are all electromagnetic, and we all have male/female energy—which is not sexual. When you do mediumship, you use the "feminine" energy more than the "male" energy. Many straight men are uncomfortable with tapping into this female energy. Gay men are more comfortable tapping into it, so more male mediums tend to be "gay." Straight men are often conditioned from childhood to deny their feminine energy-side, so they do not tap into it very much. Society tends to emphasize to men that they are not supposed to "feel," for instance, "real men don't cry." You can't be a medium without being able to feel deeply. (Brown, 2004 in Leonard (a), 2005)

Conclusive results of this assumption will have to await further research in the future, as data on this aspect was not adequately collected to form a theory in which to make a definitive deduction on the subject.

Statistics on the Age of the Participants

The age of the participants ranged from 35 to over 74 with only 3% indicating they were between the ages of "35-44"; the highest percentage of respondents indicated they were between the ages of "55-64" (39%). The second largest percentage were grouped in the "65-74" age category (35%); and 16% of the subjects indicated they were between the ages of "45-54." Five percent marked the category of "Over 74." Interestingly, no subjects marked the "Under 25" or "25-34" categories.[16]

Figure 3.



[16] See Figure 3.

This data is revealing in that it suggests a very mature group of subjects, which in itself, is not surprising. In general, Spiritualism is an aging religion, with the majority of mediums and ministers being elderly (see Leonard, 2005). The research for this paper uncovered that many of the subjects began studying towards ordination later in life, often as a second career choice after pursuing totally different professions earlier in their lives. This makes sense as only 12% of the respondents indicated they were "life-long" (cradle to grave) Spiritualists which means that a large percentage followed other religious traditions before settling on Spiritualism as their chosen belief system. It stands to reason that after finding the religion, then practicing the religion for a period long enough to decide to develop one's mediumship, requires a bit of time. Once a decision was made to pursue ordination, this again adds to the length of education, making the aspiring minister older and more mature. Likely is the case in other mainstream religions, the aspiring minister grew up in the religion and the decision to pursue the ministry occurred earlier, perhaps soon after finishing high school.

The data revealed that a large majority of Spiritualist ministers do not actually receive the bulk of their income from being a Spiritualist minister. Only 1 in 9 subjects indicated that they are full-time Spiritualist ministers, deriving the bulk of their livelihood from their work in the ministry. So, out of 54 subjects, only 6 indicated that their work in the Spiritualist ministry was enough to fully support them in their lives. This is just over 11% of the total, which starkly contrasts to other mainstream denominations where the majority of ministers are supported fully (along with his/her spouse and children) by the church's congregation through tithing and donations by the parishioners and members; these ministers are often supplied with a parsonage and other perks such as gasoline money to visit the infirm and sick, in addition to supplemental money earned through officiating at weddings and funerals.

Statistics on the Religious and Spirituality Backgrounds of the Participants

The data in this study revealed a number of interesting clues as to why the respondents pursued Spiritualism and the ministry. A low percentage of the total number of subjects actually grew up with Spiritualism as their primary religion. This partially explains why the subjects had varied and often multiple religious experiences before deciding to follow Spiritualism as their chosen religion. The majority of the respondents converted to Spiritualism when they were well into middle-age, suggesting that they had difficulty finding a spiritual path that was satisfying and enriching to them. By deciding upon Spiritualism as a religion later in life, this then pushed back the average age of when they became certified mediums and subsequently made the decision to become ordained ministers.

Religious Backgrounds

Since only 12% of the respondents indicated that they were "lifelong" Spiritualists (with 88% indicating that they were not), it is not at all surprising that the subjects experienced a wide range of religious traditions while growing up and as adults. In fact, the majority indicated that they dabbled in several religions before settling down with Spiritualism. This

phenomenon is common amongst Spiritualists and one I have labeled as "religion hopping."[17]

The majority of the ministers surveyed clearly indicated a number of religions they followed before becoming Spiritualists. The subjects were asked: "Before being ordained as a Spiritualist minister, what was your religious background?" They were then asked to list (according to the time period in their life) the religions they followed. These were categorized as "Early Childhood" (0-5; 6-12); "Teen Years" (13-15; 16-19); "Young Adulthood" (20-23; 24-26; 27-29); "Middle-Age" (30-35; 36-40; 41-45; 46-49); and "Senior Years" (50-59; 60-69; 70-79; 80-89; Over 90). Within these categories, the subjects marked accordingly their religious inclinations during the various time periods of their lives.

The results were compelling as the majority of the ministers (roughly 88%) indicated having experienced numerous religions and spiritual phases throughout their lives before embracing Spiritualism. Catholicism received the highest percentage, with 39% of the respondents indicating that at some point in their religious lives they had followed this religion. The second highest percentage (24%) indicated that they identified at some time in their life with Methodism, and coming in third at 17% was the Baptist church. It is important to note that a few subjects indicated having embraced all three at some point in their religious lives, with more than several indicating even more variety in their responses, as many as five or six. In total, even though there were only 54 ministers in this study, they indicated on the survey 97 different belief systems, religions or denominations in their answers.

As delineated above, nearly 40% of the respondents indicated that at some point in their religious backgrounds, they formally followed Catholicism as a philosophy and religion. Among these subjects, a large number were born Catholic and eventually converted to Spiritualism while many of the remainder subjects converted to Catholicism after following one or more different religious traditions before finally converting to Spiritualism.

The remaining 60% of the respondents indicated following at some time during their lifetime a variety of religious traditions before becoming a Spiritualist. Within the protestant tradition (in addition to the 24% indicating being raised Methodist; 17% Baptist; and 13% Lutheran), other denominations, movements or traditions included: Amish, Mennonite, Pantheist, Buddhist, Wiccan, Salvation Army, Episcopalian, Christian Science, Presbyterian, Disciples of Christ, Quaker, Greek Orthodox, Seventh Day Adventist, Judaism, and New Age/Metaphysical.[18]

For example, the subject identified as "II"[19] indicated during his formative years he was a practicing Methodist; but in his early twenties became a Pantheist; then in his late twenties

[17] This is where "a person will seek out a religion, try it for a while realizing that it does not offer them what they are looking for, then try another, and sometimes another, until they finally end up with one that they like, in these cases, embracing Spiritualism." (Leonard (a), 175)

[18] See Appendix B.

[19] When the surveys were received, each subject's survey was assigned a letter in the alphabet, A-Z. Once the first 26 were taken, double letters (*e.g.* aa or bb) were given for the next 26 subjects; triple letters were then assigned once these letters were used. The surveys were completely anonymous and the assigning of letters to each one was done randomly in the order they were received to ensure complete anonymity of the subjects.

became an avowed atheist. In his early 30s, "Il" embraced Buddhism (Yogic initially, then converted to Taoist Buddhism). He continued this philosophy until his late 50s then converted to Spiritualism, embracing this philosophy to the point of attending seminary and becoming an ordained Spiritualist minister in his sixties. This illustrates very succinctly the concept of "religion hopping" which I noticed throughout many of the respondents' surveys while analyzing the data for this study.

This contrasts deeply to mainstream denominations that have generations of families attending the same church. (see Loessin, 2004) Likely, a percentage of traditional Christian congregants and adherents may change churches, but usually within the same denomination, and occasionally it is from one Christian denomination to another. The Spiritualist ministers in this study repeatedly showed not only testing the waters of various Christian denominations by perhaps attending a different church, but often times following a completely different denomination, religion or spiritual tradition all together. The ministers in this study also indicated that at some point in their lives they were agnostic (5 subjects) and atheist (2 subjects) before becoming Spiritualists.[20]

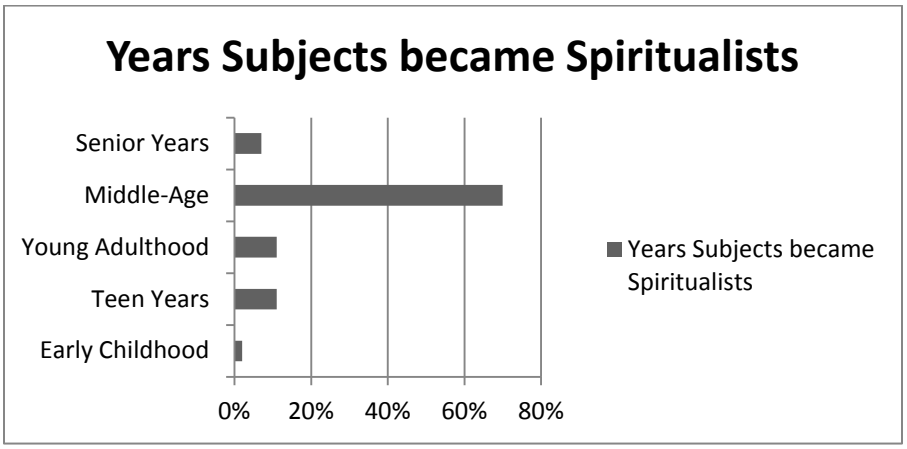
In addition, the research shows that the subjects in this study were indeed a church-going group overall. When asked: "How regularly did you attend church while growing up?" 76% marked "weekly"; 6% indicated "monthly"; 13% marked "several times a year"; and only 5% indicated "once a year or less." The act of going to church was definitely a part of the majority of the subjects' lives during their formative years. This may serve to explain why the subjects tended to hop around and try different religions and belief systems because they had life-long experiences in being churched and either knew what they did not like with regards to religion, hence the need to search for a religion which more suited their spiritual needs; or they were very curious and wanted to experience a variety of belief systems before ultimately settling on Spiritualism. In other words, church was not a foreign concept to them and they felt comfortable embracing religion (in some cases, over and over again) which indicates that they were a largely "churchified" group of subjects.

Statistics on Years Subjects became Spiritualists

The years of formal affiliation of the subjects in Spiritualism as a religion ranged from early childhood to the participants' senior years. The mean average of years when the subjects became practicing Spiritualists was "middle-age" (between the ages of 30 and 49). The number of "lifelong" Spiritualists (the criterion being that the person practiced Spiritualism since "early childhood" and/or their "teen years") was 12%. Those practicing Spiritualism as young adults was 11% of the total; middle age was 70% of the total; and senior years was 7% of the total.[21]

[20] See Appendix B.
[21] See Figure 4.

Figure 4.



These statistics further illustrate the fact that Spiritualism is an aging religion, with the majority of the participants being middle-aged or elderly. This helps to explain why the Spiritualist ministers in this study were much older when they received the "calling" to the ministry and became ordained ministers; the largest portion of these subjects was well into "middle-age" when they first embraced Spiritualism as their religion. With so few younger mediums deciding to become ordained ministers, waiting in the wings to take over the work of the older ones, Spiritualist mediumship and the ministry as we know it may eventually reach a state of extreme crisis if more younger people do not begin to pursue studies toward ordination.

The "Calling" and Preparation for the Ministry

Everyone who chooses to enroll in a seminary program (with the intention of becoming an ordained minister) does so for very personal reasons that involve a multitude of factors, not least of which is the personal relationship the person has with God—but which may also include familial, social, financial and even emotional considerations. The call to service is largely assumed to be pastoral in nature, but can be in the form of missionary, educational, counseling or social work. In the majority of these cases, people look to an established seminary, theological/divinity school, or graduate program as preparation for this type of work once they have received their calling and have made the decision to serve God and humanity in this capacity.

This spiritual awakening can happen during adolescence or as a college student; or it can occur to someone much older who has worked in a completely unrelated career or profession for a number of years—nearly always, however, it involves a need to seek a deeper level of spiritual understanding and knowledge that comes from an internal vantage point to follow a vocation in the ministry.

The word "vocation" comes from the Latin verb *vocare*, which means "to call." Vocation as "calling" has dominated how it is understood in religious contexts. For many who are considering being ordained, the idea of call is something literal: The voice of God speaks, directing the listener to a life of ministry. For others, the idea of call is figurative: It might

come as a feeling, a kind of knowing, a crazy idea that won't leave, a sense that this is the work they are meant to do in the world. Sometimes call is understood as the pattern that emerges in a string of events. Other times the voices calling belong to friends and family or to the words on the pages of a book. (Sentilles, 1)

As illustrated in the above paragraph, seminary students who decide to pursue a life in the ministry have a variety of influences which guide them in their decision. This applies to aspiring Spiritualist ministers, as well, but the "call" often is something that is experienced later in life (as will be shown in the research data) and usually takes the form of a "message" heard by the recipient. "Spiritualism has a specific approach to this subject and to God. The average individual expects to hear an audible voice and see a visible form—an experience that would enable him [or her] to believe that he [or she] has made contact with some unusual force." (Burroughs, 91)

Mainstream Christianity—in the form of churches, seminaries, institutes, and universities—has always strived to instill a deep sense of commitment and dedication into its seminary students who hope to become ordained ministers by emphasizing the importance of being personally called by God to pursue the work of Jesus, the Christ. (See Manly, Bartels, and Ryle) A goodly percentage of Christian ministers who are raised in the religion, often attended the church of their parents. (Loessin, 21) This regular contact and exposure to their religious denomination aided these men and women to follow the next logical step in their spiritual development by seeking further to solidify their faith by answering a call to the ministry. The majority of Protestant denominations actively prepare men and women for the ministry through in-house programs that represent the particular belief system of the supervising organization.

In the religion of Spiritualism, this is also true, but a distinct difference between the two traditions is an overwhelming majority of Spiritualist ministers were not raised in the religion but converted as adults, and at a much later point in their life decided to pursue the ministry as a vocation. (Leonard (a), 175, 184) In addition, the majority of Spiritualist ministers actually was raised in either a Protestant or Catholic household and attended church regularly (or somewhat regularly) while growing up, as mentioned earlier.[22] However, at some point during their spiritual search, these individuals left the denomination or church of their childhood and early adult life and began to seek more deeply—often hopping from one religion to another—until finally happening upon the Gospel of Spiritualism which on some higher level resonated in them enough to not only become Spiritualists but also to embark upon the path of developing their mediumship and becoming ordained Spiritualist ministers.

Call to the Ministry

The survey asked the subjects if there indeed was a specific time in their lives when they first sensed a higher calling which led them into the pastoral ministry. Seventy-eight percent indicated "yes" and 20% marked "no". Only 2% marked "uncertain." Over half of the subjects (56%) indicated that this calling occurred over the age of 30; 9% indicated it occurred between the ages of 19-30; and 22% received a calling under the age of twelve.

[22] See Leonard (a), 175.

Thirteen percent indicated they received the calling during the bulk of their teen years, between the ages of 13-18.

When asked to select the most influential person used by Infinite Intelligence, God, the Creator, in this "call" experience, 24% of the respondents indicated "spirit guides" by writing this on the blank line marked "other." Purposefully, I designed this study without specifically listing "spirit guides" in order to ascertain whether or not the ministers received a calling from Spirit directly. I was worried that by listing "spirit guides" as an option, it might unduly influence the respondents to select it because of the fact that mediumship is such a central component of being an effective Spiritualist minister; it might have pressured them to select it because of what they perceive to be what might be considered the proper or usual way to receive the call to the ministry in Spiritualism. The results are telling in that without having the option explicitly given to them, nearly a quarter of the respondents indicated that they did receive a calling from Spirit (most likely in the form of a clairvoyant, clairsentient, or clairaudient message), which confirms the notion expressed by Burroughs (1962) that a large portion of Spiritualists do receive a direct calling from Spirit which prompts them to pursue studies towards becoming a minister.

Not surprising, no respondents chose "Camp Staff/Instructor" or "Other Church Member" as being the single most influential person in their call to the ministry. Since all of the subjects were converts to Spiritualism, and most of them were not raised in the religion, it stands to reason that other influences affected their decision, unrelated to a church-rooted person. In contrast, Loessin (2004, p. 92) reported in a similar study of Christian clergy that 50% of respondents reported that their pastor or minister was the most influential person in their decision to pursue the ministry. In this study, only 35% of the respondents indicated "Pastor/Minister" as the single most influential person who influenced them. Again, this suggests that Spiritualist seminary students did not have the same spiritual support network regarding their religion that their Christian counterparts had.

In the section asking the respondents to mark all categories that apply to their situation regarding general influence in their decision to pursue seminary studies, I did include "Spirit Guide(s)" as an option. This received nearly the most selections of any other category with 56% of the respondents marking this category; "Own mediumship development" received the most with 57%. The category of "other church or staff member" received the lowest markings with only 4% of the respondents choosing this option. The categories and their percentages are as follows: Although a pastor or minister was not the most influential variable in a student's decision to pursue the ministry, 33% of the respondents did indicate that a clergyperson did have some influence in their overall decision. [See Table 1.]

When asked to whom God led the respondent to for assistance, or who was helpful to the respondent in clarifying or interpreting the "call" experience, 69% indicated their Spiritualist minister, which is nearly twice the percentage indicated in the earlier data where only 35% indicated that the single most influential person used by God in their call to the ministry was their pastor/minister. Once the subjects received the call to the ministry, it was their pastors who assisted them in interpreting this and counseling them on how to proceed. Fifty-nine percent of the subjects indicated "development teacher" as the second most important person used in clarifying or interpreting this call experience. This is related to a student's need to hone his/her mediumship gifts in order to become an effective minister. It

stands to reason that the development teacher the student chooses to work with during his/her entire study period is the most influential person for the student throughout the duration of his/her seminary experience. The development teacher works closely with the student, assisting, critiquing, and guiding him/her in mediumship development. (Leonard (d), 56) At the beginning of their call to the ministry, ensconced in the program fully, it is not surprising that students view their development teacher (59%), Spiritualist minister (69%), their seminary teacher/instructor (20%), and their friends (20%) as being the ones to assist and help them in clarifying and interpreting this "call" experience.

Although the original call to the ministry was quite personal for many of the respondents, indicating that it came from Spirit directly, there were other factors that influenced them in their decision to act upon this call and who helped mentor them as they studied and proceeded. When asked what single factor (among a list of options) that is most important to the respondent in successfully working towards certification and training for the ministry, 44% indicated "personal discipline and dedication" as their primary choice. This reinforces prior research data results that Spiritualist seminary students do consider their mediumship abilities—and the personal work involved in this development—as the most important aspect of their ministerial training. (Leonard (d), 56) This suggests that without the proper discipline and dedication, the ministers felt they could not be effective ministers to do the work they were intended to do.

TABLE 1: General Influence in the Call to the Ministry[1]

30% Visiting a Camp/Church

15% Spiritualist home/parents

37% Counsel of a Spiritualist Minister

30% Attending a message service

30% Attending a séance/healing circle

57% Own mediumship Development

44% Development Teacher

28% Receiving a message at church

56% Spirit guide(s)

20% Family member

17% Friend(s)

33% Pastor/Minister

4% Other church staff member

19% Seminary teacher/instructor

22% Other (please specify) [2]

[1] The percentages were rounded up to the next number. Also, these percentages represent the percent of respondents who selected that particular category as they were instructed to choose as many that apply to their situation.

[2] In this section the subjects indicated Spirit, spouses, non-Spiritualist minister, personal need to serve, physician, a reading from a medium, or a trauma that prompted the person to pursue the ministry.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was undertaken in part to determine whether Spiritualist ministers were raised in the religion or if they converted from another religion; in addition, another aim was to discover what reasons or motives they had to pursue Spiritualism and mediumship if, indeed, they had converted to the religion. Also, this study endeavored to find out what formal training the Spiritualist mediums were required to fulfill before becoming certified. Several research questions were examined to offer more in-depth analysis on the factors that relate to the ministers and their mediumship. All questions consisted of a content analysis approach using a questionnaire.

One research question was posed and answered was—What types of religious backgrounds and upbringings did persons who converted to Spiritualism have (and the effects on them); and what type of person trains to become an ordained Spiritualist minister? The answers were more complex than anticipated. The subjects who converted to Spiritualism were predominantly raised in or came from Christian backgrounds; and these subjects were likely drawn to Spiritualism due to a lack of understanding and flexibility by their former churches. The majority of the subjects in the study were in fact converts to the religion; nearly all of the subjects had been raised in some type of religion while growing up. Of those, a high percentage of the respondents had practiced Christianity or had been exposed to some type of religious upbringing that followed a Christian denomination of a Catholic or Protestant tradition.

Interestingly, it was discovered that the majority of Spiritualist ministers—both men and women—had engaged in a phenomenon I labeled “religion hopping” before settling on Spiritualism as a religion. A number of the subjects experienced multiple belief systems, religions, and spiritual practices (throughout their lives) before decisively converting to Spiritualism. This phenomenon is a process related to an individual’s desire to “find himself/herself;” hoping to experience a spiritual epiphany, of sorts, that would ultimately be a spiritual self-awakening that the individual would intuitively know to be “the one” religion he/she must follow.

These assumptions are derived from the theory that these people felt they lacked the necessary elements they wanted or needed on a spiritual level from the religious traditions and belief systems they adhered to during the formative years of their lives. This created a profound need from within to search for a spiritual path by dabbling in a wide variety of traditions, practices, and belief systems, searching for the one spiritual path that afforded them the essentials of a spiritual life that were flexible and tolerant enough to allow them the freedom to worship in a way that was fulfilling and comfortable to them. Many of the subjects likely rejected the rigidity of mainstream, fundamentalist-based religions, which ultimately impelled them to search elsewhere. Spiritualism was attractive to these subjects because it allowed a mixing of traditions, practices, and belief systems, as well as combining, adapting, and incorporating those they liked and felt contented in pursuing.

A striking discovery was made regarding the ratio between men and women who are Spiritualist ministers—overwhelmingly, women outnumbered men (2 to 1). This is in stark contrast to mainstream religions where church elders are predominantly men, and where many fundamentalist religions prohibit women from holding any leadership positions and

discourage them from becoming ordained ministers, basing this prohibition on biblical teachings.

Spiritualism is certainly a religion that offers women complete equality in all facets of the movement. This trend has clear historical roots that date back to the beginning of the movement where women were at the forefront of the religion holding leadership and ministerial positions. Spiritualism attracted women then, as it does today, due to its egalitarian policies. Women are, and always have been, allowed to be full and equal members to men, and enjoy any and all facets of the religion on equal footing.

It was noted, but not researched completely in the main part of the study, that this equality of the sexes extends to "sexual orientation" as well. The percentage of homosexuals or bisexuals who are Spiritualist ministers (28%) more than doubles the percentage largely agreed upon by the scientific community which hypothesizes that anywhere from 3% to 15% of any given population is homosexual or bisexual. A significant number of male mediums are homosexual and as a rule are completely accepted within their Spiritualist communities and churches. This may have something to do with the type of energy needed to conduct the work of mediumship; mediums tend to use more of a female generated energy while doing mediumship work, rather than a male-based energy. Gay men tend to be more comfortable than straight men in tapping into this energy source. Partly, this is due to societal pressures placed upon straight men to act and behave "manly;" straight men have a more difficult time than gay men, it is presumed, to delve into this female-energy source.

The gay men interviewed in this study found Spiritualism to be an attractive alternative to mainstream religion for many of the same reasons that the women of yesteryear did—a tolerance and openness that offered them a level of respect, a feeling of equality and complete acceptance within the religion. Few mainstream religions even recognize, let alone accept, gay and lesbian parishioners into their flocks. As one female Spiritualist medium commented to me, quoting the leader of a Spiritualist camp, "This camp was built on the backs of gay men…" which clearly suggests that homosexual Spiritualists have had a very positive and productive influence on the movement, just as women have had, throughout its long history.

Also revealed in the fieldwork data was the finding that Spiritualism is a rapidly "graying religion." This term is used to describe the current phenomenon of the statistics on aging within the religion. The majority of the participants were mature in age, with the youngest respondent being middle-aged. This is a troubling prospect for the religion as it is in danger of literally "dying out" within the next couple of decades unless an influx of young blood is infused into the movement to serve as the new torchbearers to carry the religion's banner on and into the next century.

One possible reason for the recent decline in membership and lack of dedicated interest in the religion by more young people who choose to become Spiritualist ministers has to do with "choice"—there are so many more spiritually-based movements today than there were in the past that competition has become quite keen in attracting new members searching for a belief system outside the confines of mainstream religions. This influx of "choice" between religions has also taken its toll on the mainstream religions; people are following a number of belief systems that do not necessarily precipitate becoming a member of or attending a

church on a regular basis. So, in many ways, Spiritualism has become a part of the "mainstream" over the years, adopting a system that is still on the fringes of the more traditional belief systems but "churchified" enough to be considered somewhat mainstream. Many younger people currently prefer more freedom of choice and flexibility in their religious proclivities, choosing belief systems that offer even less structure and dogma than Spiritualism.

The New Age movement has gained in popularity in recent years, attracting many younger people, because of this lack of structure and dogma; although Spiritualism maintains that it is a creedless religion, it still requires a certain amount of time and dedication to be an adherent (*i.e*. attending church/message services, volunteering, contributing monetarily, *etc*). The main difference between the New Age movement and the Spiritualist movement is that "Spiritualism" is a religion, and the "New Age" movement is still but a trend. Spiritualists are very quick to point out that Spiritualism is not "New Age" but "Old Age," and generally they do not appreciate being categorized as a "New Age" religion. Although similar in their teachings and philosophies, allowing a mixing of traditions, practices and belief systems and "free thinking," the New Age movement does not have a centralized or organized belief system, incorporating a system with regulations and principles. It is all encompassing of anything that is not "mainstream," and is more culturally than religiously based, focusing on spirituality as it pertains to various peoples and traditions, rather than to a singular belief system.

Spiritualism requires a certain degree of dedication and perseverance, and not mere dabbling. Ironically, it was for the same reasons that people initially developed Spiritualism as a religion that people today follow New Age ideas and practices—a desire for a less regimented, more flexible and open attitude toward spirituality. Because Spiritualism is organized and maintains principles and a specified set of beliefs and practices, perhaps young people today find it too constricting and prefer to have more spiritual freedom, even though many of the practices and beliefs overlap, and in essence, are the same. Spiritualist churches must work to devise a way to attract these "spirituality seekers" if they are to survive the current crisis of being a "graying religion."

Limitations

A number of limitations affected the ability of general conclusions to be drawn from this study. The participants who participated were all ordained Spiritualist ministers, but were mostly selected through "snowball sampling"; therefore, the results cannot necessarily be generalized to draw inferences about other ordained Spiritualist ministers who may be working as ministers and mediums in their own communities. Also, since I did not have an opportunity to meet personally many of the subjects, I had to depend upon my core group of contacts to follow strictly the criteria I had set out initially. This is why eight respondents' surveys had to be discarded because they did not seemingly fit the criteria and I suspected that these subjects were not ordained Spiritualist ministers when I began to analyze their surveys.

The number of participants in this study also could have been increased. Although the years as a minister indicated an aging population, it is mildly suspected that an increase in the number of participants could alter the results of the analysis slightly. It is not known,

then, if a significant number of Spiritualists are younger in age as the subjects used in this study indicated the opposite.

Recommendations for Further Research

Several areas of potential research arose out of the need for continued study of Spiritualist ministers and their mediumship. The first area would expand the study of participants who clearly have their own churches and who devote their lives fulltime to the Spiritualist ministry. This recommendation would provide a broader spectrum for evaluating Spiritualist ministers in more detail and with more conclusive evidence. Also, breaking down the subjects into more specific categories would generate more significant data regarding their personal lives and motivation; specifically, a study that included not only sexual orientation as a component, but focused on more minute details such as same sex marriage statistics, the percentage of children (both biological and adopted children) being raised within the same sex marriage, age of coming out publically about their homosexuality and how their homosexuality affected their decision to pursue ordination; all of these questions would offer valuable insight into this area of the study.

A second area in need of study would be what percentage of Spiritualist mediums hail from countries other than the United States; how prevalent the Spiritualist movement in these countries is; and what religious backgrounds do these people have (if converts to Spiritualism). There are significant numbers of Spiritualist ministers in Great Britain and Australia, so it would be interesting to investigate how their associations are faring in contemporary times in comparison to their American counterparts: Are they a religion mostly of "religion hoppers"? Is the religion "graying" as rapidly as it is in the United States? What type of training and certification process do they require to become ordained ministers? These questions were well beyond the scope of this study, but would be of value in future research studies on this topic.

Finally, the propensity of Spiritualist ministers who sometimes feel the need to hide their religious affiliation and mediumship work from outsiders is an area in need of more in-depth investigation. What are the reasons behind this hesitation to be open and honest about their religion? Is it related to embarrassment, shyness, a need for privacy, or is it out of a sense of fear? What percentage of Spiritualist ministers has actually experienced an overt form of "religion bashing" (either verbally or physically)? Future research could serve to uncover the answers to these questions, as well as generating further more relevant research data on Spiritualist mediums and their mediumship.

This ethno-religious study of Spiritualist ministers offers new insight into the religion, in general, and more so into the motivations and personal lives of the ministers themselves. Although Spiritualism is a rather new religion in comparison to its Christian-based cousins, it has a long and vibrant history that affords the researcher of religion a most fascinating area of exploration in which to pursue.

In the end, it is hoped that this study offers new insights and research data not previously found in the area of ordained Spiritualist ministers and their call to the ministry in the religion of Spiritualism. As evidenced in this paper, the call to the ministry is often assumed to be pastoral but can also include a variety of other areas that serve humanity,

allowing ordained Spiritualist ministers to heed the call to the ministry in a way that uses their gifts to the best of their ability and to the greatest glory of God.

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Appendix A: Percentage of Female Clergy in Christian Denominations

Denomination	Total Clergy in 1994	% Female Clergy
American Baptist Churches	**5758**	**12%**
Assemblies of God	**18,570**	**8%**
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	**5469**	**18%**
Church of God (Anderson, IN)	**2955**	**10%**
Church of the Brethren	**1163**	**12%**
Church of the Nazarene	**3413**	**11%**
Episcopal Church	**11,314**	**12%**
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	**13,225**	**11%**
Free Methodist Church	**1878**	**1%**
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)	**14,578**	**19%**
Southern Baptist Convention	**35,130**	**4%**
Unitarian-Universalist Association	**1236**	**30%**
United Church of Christ	**7297**	**25%**
United Methodist Church	**20,617**	**15%**
Wesleyan Church	**2190**	**11%**

"According to a study done in the mid 1990's by Barbara Brown Zikmund, Adair Lummis and Patricia Chang there are 16,321 female clergy in 15 mainline and conservative Protestant denominations. This means that roughly 12 percent of clergy in those denominations are female.

The distribution is not equal across denominations however. The more theologically liberal groups such as the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ lead in the percent of their clergy who are female with 30 and 25 percent respectively.

Most theologically conservative groups in the list - the Southern Baptist Convention, the Free Methodist Church and the Assemblies of God all have less that 10 percent of their pastors being female." [Retrieved on September 24, 2011 at http://hirr.hartsem. edu/research /quick_ question3.html]

Appendix B:

Table of Religions, Denominations, or Spiritual Traditions of Respondents

Religion, Denomination or Spiritual Tradition	Percentage of Subjects for each category	Number of Subjects (N=54) for each category
Amish	2%	1
Mennonite	2%	1
Catholicism	39%	21
Christian (Protestant)	15%	8
Baptist	17%	9
Unity	9%	5
Salvation Army	2%	1
Methodist	24%	13
Buddhism	3%	2
Wiccan	2%	1
Episcopalian	6%	3
Lutheran	13%	7
Christian Science	4%	2
Presbyterianism	2%	1
Native American	2%	1
Disciples of Christ	2%	1
Quakers	2%	1
Greek Orthodox	2%	1
Seventh Day Adventist	2%	1
Jewish	2%	1
New Age/Metaphysical	6%	3
Searching	9%	5
Pantheist	2%	1
Atheist	4%	2
Agnostic	9%	5

Baudrillard, Cioran, and the Postmodern Gods

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"The eclipse of God left us up against reality. Where will the eclipse of reality leave us?"[1]
--Jean Baudrillard, *The Lucidity Pact*
"Man can breathe only in the shadow of eroded divinities."[2]
--Emile Cioran, *The New Gods*

Upon the death of French postmodern sociologist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard[3] in 2007, the *London Telegraph* highlighted his biographical obituary by stating that he believed that "…God's place was taken by the mass media…[and]…[W]e live in a Disneyesque world in which our understanding is shaped by media-driven signs, and the tools of historical intelligibility have disappeared…[so]…how can we tell what is real—if there is indeed any such thing as reality?[4] He came to conclude (actually self-adapting a Biblical verse from Ecclesiastes 1:17-18)[5] that reality does exist but it has only one element: "The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth—it is the truth which conceals that there is none…The simulacrum is true."[6]

While Baudrillard asserted that he was certain God existed, he also stated that he did not not believe in Him. This postmodern paradox illustrates the simulacrum that has deconstructed the godhead that created the heavens and the earth and gave it structure and order and applied to it the human and earthly attributes of a being unrecognizable when compared to reality—if indeed any realities exist at all. In fact, God's place in the postmodern world has been assumed by an avalanche of mass media images that obliterate tradition and reality and produce infinite numbers of alternative interpretations of every situation or object, casting any fragment of historical certainty into a wasteland where all truth is banished forever.[7]

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[1] Baudrillard, Jean. *The Intelligence of Evil, or the Lucidity Pact*. Trans. Chris Turner. New York: Berg. 2004. p. 21.
[2] Cioran, Emile. *The New Gods*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Quadrangle, 1969. p. 18.
[3] Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007) was one of France's leading intellectuals and a contemporary philosopher, sociologist, and postmodernist.
[4] "Jean Baudrillard". *The London Telegraph*. 08 March 2007. Accessed Feb. 12, 2012. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/1544846/Jean-Baudrillard.html>.
[5] Ecclesiastes 1:17-18 in the 21st Century KJV reads: (17): "And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly. But I perceived that this also is a vexation of spirit. (18): "For in much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Baudrillard interpreted this passage to mean that since nothing is real, there can be no wisdom as that requires reality, and thus, there can be no sorrow in a simulated world. Cioran similarly posited that there is great joy in suffering as the hope that despair creates is almost an ecstatic experience, explaining religious practices from fasting to self-flagellation.
[6] Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. Trans. Sheila Faria Glaser. Ann Arbor: U. Michigan Press, 1994. p. 1.
[7] "Jean Baudrillard". *The London Telegraph op.cit.*

What has come to be called "the postmodern condition" is nothing more than an evolution of answers stemming from a problematic singularity dating back to the dawn of human existence. According to the profound Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, the necessity to create structure and order from chaos—in essence, the necessity of attempting to answer the "Why are we here?" question of life and existence itself—results in the creation of an artificial ordering (or structuring) of an otherwise random and unexplainable existence.[8]

Bauman continues that by employing the believable but fictional concept of "society", an "effective enough" strategy against the fear of chaos is achieved but it is still, "a pristine and 'brute' fact that human beings exist in the never-ending, since never fully successful, effort to escape from Chaos: society, its institutions and their routines, its images and their composition, its structures and their managerial principles, are all facets of that forever inconclusive and relentless escape."[9]

Using the examples of birth and death (that Bauman describes as "the entrance of the new and the exit of the familiar"), there exists "two gaping holes in the pretence [sic] of order" that can never be filled satisfactorily. The notions of "before" and "beyond" must be defined and thus the concept of God must fill the void they create.[10] As Nietzsche[11] states,

> "Natural death is independent of all reason and is really an irrational death…in other words, the annihilation of the most rational being through the most irrational element…[O]nly through religious illumination can the reverse appear;…the higher order (God) issues its orders, which the lower order must obey."[12]

Thus, "Society needs God" and in fact (according to Bauman), Society and God are one and the same thing. As he states, "Religion and society are one; society without religion is incomplete and doomed, unable to defend itself…"[13]

This notion is not unlike the idea of Auguste Comte, the purported Father of Sociology, who in developing his "Law of Human Progress" intimated that human beings are a curious species, rationalizing and seeking to understand the causes of all phenomena that

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[8] Bauman, Zygmunt. *Life in Fragments: Essays in Postmodern Morality*. New York: Wiley, 1995. pp 12-17. The section of Bauman's work highlighted herein is entitled, "Society: The Operation Cover-Up" and is a brilliant discussion of how human-induced order emerged from natural chaotic existence, where knowledge, religion, and wisdom have been applied to explain phenomena, and how postmodern ideas are a continuation of nothing more than subjective interpretation of an unchangeable chaotic existence.

[9] *Ibid*. pp 13-4. Bauman's idea herein is an adaptation of Cornelius Castoriadis, who he quotes and references in his work. That discussion can be found at Castoriadis, Cornelius. "Institution of Society and Religion." Trans. David Ames Curtis. *Thesis Eleven*. Vol. 31, (1993). pp 1-17.

[10] *Ibid*. pp 14-5.

[11] Freiderich Nietszche (1844-1900) was a German philosopher, poet, composer and classical philologist who has remained influential in extentialism, nihilism, and postmodernism.

[12] Nietzsche, Friederich. *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits.* Trans. Paul Cohn. Edinburgh: Foulis, 1991. pp 286-7.

[13] Bauman, *op.cit.* p. 16. [Related note: Cioran wrote, "A civilization is destroyed only when its gods are destroyed"].

directly and indirectly affect them. When assigning attribution, if the reason is unknown, the supernatural always provides a convenient cause of anything. His "Law of Human Progress" (or "stages of knowledge" as his construction is often called) begins with the earliest of humans who explained all phenomena through "fetishism". Whether caused by inanimate objects, idols, trees, or other esoteric means, every happening had a cause, albeit one rooted in the most extreme version of the supernatural. In ancient Greece, for example, if a statue fell over and killed someone, the statue would be put on trial for murder, given the death penalty, and destroyed. When Pythagoras developed his famous theorem, since all mathematical knowledge came from the gods, he went out and sacrificed an ox thanking them for bestowing their knowledge upon him. Eventually, individual deities assumed the responsibilities for events and occurrences and the world of multiple gods dominated the causative necessity—the polytheistic stage. Finally, the gods synthesized (or morphed) into a singular God—monotheism—and He became the responsible entity for all phenomena, good, bad, or indifferent.

Comte's theory continued, evolving humankind through the stages of metaphysics, the polyscientific, and eventually the monoscientific, where he identified his new discipline of sociology as the "queen of all sciences" and eventually equated God with society itself, where the "true religion" was nothing more than society worshipping itself and thus, society became the ultimate explanation of all human phenomena.

Comte's "Law of Human Progress" was actually somewhat of an adaptation (perhaps even a plagiarism) of Giambattista Vico's[14] notion of "The Ages of Man." Vico believed that human history was divided into three distinct ages—the Age of the Gods (analogous to Comte's Theological stage), the Age of the Heroes (analogous to Comte's Metaphysical stage), and the Age of Man, (analogous to Comte's notion of the Positive [or scientific] Stage). However, Vico and Comte both did not recognize the potential (or eventuality) of the postmodern.

Emile Cioran[15], 20th century Romanian-French contemporary philosopher, nihilist, and observer of the emerging postmodern world, also commented on this transition. Cioran believed that while "the human soul is naturally pagan",[16] (like Turtullian[17]) it was actually polytheism that "corresponded better to the diversity of our tendencies and our impulses."[18] As he states:

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[14] Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) was an Italian political philosopher, rhetorician, historian, and jurist. A critic of modern rationalism and apologist of classical antiquity, Vico's *magnum opus* was entitled, *Scienza Nuova* (1725), often published in English as *The New Science*. Vico's system was also employed by James Joyce in constructing his novel *Finnegan's Wake.*

[15] Emile Cioran (1911-1995) was born in Romania but lived in France for most of his adult life. He was a "philosopher of despair", influenced by both Nietzsche and Oswald Spengler [*Decline of the West, Vol. 1 and 2*], and held views sympathetic to authoritarianism. He contributed to the postmodern perspective as expounded by both Bauman and Baudrillard.

[16] Cioran, *The New Gods. op cit.,* p. 24.

[17] Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, anglicised as Tertullian (c. 160 – c. 225 AD),] was a prolific early Christian author from Carthage in the Roman province of Africa. He is the first Christian author to produce an extensive corpus of Latin Christian literature. He also was a notable early Christian apologist and a polemicist against heresy. Tertullian has been called "the father of Latin Christianity" and "the founder of Western theology."[

[18] Cioran, *The New Gods. op cit.,* p. 22.

> "Monotheism curbs our sensibilities: It deepens us by narrowing us. A system of constraints which affords us an inner dimension at the cost of the flowering of our powers, it constitutes a barrier, it halts our expansion, it throws us out of gear. Surely we were more normal with several gods than we are with only one…
>
> Under the regime of several gods, fervor is shared. When it is addressed to one god alone, it is concentrated, exacerbated, and ends by turning into aggression, into *faith*…Faith is a Christian invention; it supposes one and the same disequilibrium in man and in God, swept on by a dialogue as dramatic as it is disordered. Whence the frantic character of the new religion. The old one, so much more human, left you the faculty of choosing the god you wanted; since it imposed none upon you, it was up to you to incline toward one or another. The more capricious you were, the more you needed to change gods…To all appearances, man has given himself gods out of a need to be protected, guaranteed—in reality, out of a greed to suffer. So long as man believed in a multitude of them, he had indulged in freedom of choice, in loopholes. Subsequently limiting himself to just one, he was thereby afflicted by a supplement of shackles and throes. Surely there is but one animal which loves and hates itself to the point of vice…What cruelty to ourselves…*The one* God makes life unbreathable. [19]

Given this "unnatural" monotheistic state that Cioran describes so thoroughly, it comes as no surprise that he concludes that Christianity will soon disappear, not due to rejecting the need for deities, but by experiencing a communal *restoration*[20] to some form of polytheistic status which is rightfully (according to Cioran) "natural" for humankind. His almost cryptic prediction is stated as follows:

> "And just as paganism was to give way before Christianity, so this last God will have to yield to some new belief. Stripped of aggression, He no longer constitutes an obstacle to the outburst of other gods; they need only arrive—and perhaps they will arrive. Doubtless they will not have the countenance nor even the mask of the gods, but they will be no less fearful for that.[21]

But who are Cioran's "new gods"? Jean Baudrillard's body of work and thought provides the means toward developing an answer. As the only reality, the Simulacrum[22] must be the singular entity that controls every idea, thought, appearance, belief, interpretation, and in short, every earthly perception. It is the only truth from which all else emanates. Thus, the Simulacrum is a multifaceted entity that is as close to polytheistic

[19] Cioran, *The New Gods*. *op.cit.* pp 22-23.
[20] Cioran was against all "progress". His view was of the idealist reactionary. He once said he was against everything "since Adam".
[21] Cioran, *The New Gods. op.cit.* p. 31.
[22] The Simulacrum (from Latin) entered the English language in the late 16th century and refers to a "likeness" or a "similarity", used to describe a representation of something, especially of a god. See Baudrillard's work, *Simulacra and Simulation*, *op.cit.*

deism[23] as can be imagined. Baudrillard would conclude that any religious (or anti-religious) belief (and any other belief as well) would naturally all be *interpretations* or *perceptions* of reality and truth, which exist on multiple levels. His system defines successive phases of the *image* as follows:

Baudrillard's Successive Phases of the Image
Phase 1: It is the reflection of a basic reality
Phase 2: It masks and perverts a basic reality
Phase 3: It masks the absence of a basic reality
Phase 4: It bears no relation to any reality whatsoever, it is its own pure simulacrum

Reagrding how the *image* of God may be applied to Baudrillard's phases, he states:

> "But what if God himself can be simulated, that is to say, reduced to the signs which attest his existence? Then the whole system becomes weightless, it is no longer anything but a gigantic simulacrum—not unreal, but a simulacrum, never again exchanging for what is real, but exchanging in itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference…In the first case, the image is a good appearance—the representation is of the order of sacrament. In the second, it is an evil appearance—of the order of malefice. In the third, it plays at being an appearance—it is of sorcery. In the fourth, it is no longer in the order of appearance at all, but of simulation.
>
> The transition from signs which dissimulate something to signs which dissimulate that there is nothing, marks the decisive turning point. The first implies a theology of truth and secrecy…the second inaugurates an age of simulacra and stimulation [*sic "simulation*"], in which there is no longer any God to recognize his own, nor any last judgment to separate true from false, the real from its artificial resurrection, since everything is already dead and risen in advance."[24]

[23] Deism was a form of religious attitude (mainly in France and Britain during The Enlightenment Era of the 18th century) which was based on the idea that the world can be known only through observation, experience, interpretation, and reasoning. Postmodern theory rejects any accurate interpretations and grand narratives, but the deist idea expressed here is a postmodern version.

[24] Baudrillard, Jean. "The Precession of Simulacra" in Baudrillard's *Simulations.* Trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton, and Phillip Beitchman. New York: Semiotext(e), 1983.

Baudrillard also warned of the danger of how and for what purposes images may be distorted. There is little to safeguard against individuals or entities being involved in purposeful simulation to deceive. He contended that to *simulate* is to "blur the boundary between truth and fallacy, real and imaginary…to confuse, mask, and displace reality"—a powerful idea that iconoclasts had made the main topic of their paranoia for centuries—the fear that simulacra (images of God) would displace the idea of God as a real entity and, further, reveal that God was never any more than his own simulacrum.[25]

In the final stage of Baudrillard's theory of simulation, simulacra reaches universal proportions. He writes:

> "Today's abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept…It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality; a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map nor does it survive it. It is the map that precedes the territory—*precession of simulacra*—that engenders the territory."[26]

Thus, "God is not dead—he has become hyperreal", and a cult of the "immediate effectuation of all things" has taken the place of traditional cultural, ritual, and symbolic elaboration. Nihilism[27] has been achieved, albeit in a bizarre and unexpected manner—not "through the violent destruction of ideas, but through a stealth strategy of simulation…" Romanticism is its first great manifestation, surrealism, dada, the absurd, and political nihilism, are the second great manifestations, which corresponds to the destruction of the order of meaning.[28]

> "The stage of analysis itself has become uncertain…Implosion of meaning in the media. Implosion of the social in the masses…The masses themselves are caught up in a gigantic process of inertia through acceleration. They are this excrescent, devouring, process that annihilates all growth and surplus meaning. They are this circuit short-circuited by a monstrous finality."[29]

As Emile Cioran said, "Is the failing hero worth as little as the hero who finally triumphs? Nothing more glamorous than a splendid ending, if this world is real. If it is not, it is pure foolishness to go into ecstacies…"[30]

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[25] Park, Adrian. "Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*" *Newcastle Digital Media Research.* March 7, 2011. Accessed February 11, 2012. <http://dm.ncl.ac.uk/adrianpark/2011/03/07/jean-baudrillards-simulacra-and-simulation/>.

[26] Qtd. in McCullough, Lissa. "Jean Baudrillard and the Death of God" 2001. JCRT 2.3. Accessed. Febuary 15, 2012. < http://www.jcrt.org/archives/02.3/mccullough.shtml>.

[27] Nihilism is defined as an extreme form of skepticism, the denial of all real existence, or the possibility of an objective basis for truth and is often associated with the total rejection of established law, institutions, and orthodoxy.

[28] Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation. op.cit.* p.159.

[29] Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation. op.cit.* p.162.

[30] Cioran, Emile. *The New Gods. op. cit.* p.44.

Lissa McCullough sums up brilliantly Baudrillard's final conclusions about society in her analysis of "Baudrillard and the Death of God" (2001). She states:

> "Human life today, for Baudrillard, is invested in a self-intensifying cycle of obsessive reproduction and obsessive consumption, a cycle motivated by a death drive so powerful and so utterly in denial of itself that its activities are relegated to automation. As a cultural system, neo-capitalism[31] produces, not abundance, but an alternation between two infinitely plastic terms—shortage and abundance…This funereal procession of reproduction and consumption arises from 'the disappointed demand for totality that underlies the project of life'. Reading him is a little like encountering a postmodern Pascal. There is the sense of absurd futility and melancholy; the perception of an unbridgeable chasm between Deity and the alien world in which we are sentenced to existence…"[32]

Since to Cioran, humans gravitate toward the polytheistic, and since to Baudrillard, every entity, thought, idea, object, and literally, everything else is a simulation and representation of the original (which may also have been itself a simulation), then today's postmodern gods would be many and mere representations of traditional deities—and not all of them accurate, wholesome, or even good (as in the good versus evil duality). As humans must explain the "before" and "beyond" questions of existence (traditionally done through God and faith with the concepts of Creation and Eternal Life in Heaven or Hell), the same explanations may also be satisfied through alternative "realities" or simulations. [Athiests, who do not believe in God or any tenets of organized religion, are an example of people who present an alternative simulation or explanation to the questions that merit answering.] Baudrillard concluded that postmodern society (especially American society) was almost a total simulation, "a Disneyesque World" where the image has become more important than reality itself—where only images exist and have become the reality—the same would hold true for the conception of God and how worship is conducted. Listing the characteristics of postmodernity at this point can be a useful exercise in determining precisely who the "postmodern gods" truly are:

[31] *Read, "postmodern capitalism".*
[32] McCullough, Lissa. "Jean Baudrillard and the Death of God" 2001. JCRT 2.3. Accessed. Febuary 15, 2012. < http://www.jcrt.org/archives/02.3/mccullough.shtml>.

Characteristics of Postmodernity[33]
1. Incessant Choosing
2. Multiplying Uncertainties
3. Individuality
4. Fragmentation/Deconstruction
5. Media Influence

In an increasingly individualistic world where people are faced with growing numbers of options and choices about which they feel overwhelmed and lack confidence in making, often to the point of second-guessing themselves or having regrets about past decisions, all the while seeing traditions and things "the way they used to be" collapsing all around them, and facing a larger world where the future is cloudy and often stressful, all the while being bombarded by varying forms of media, each presenting its alternative view, opinion, recommendation, advertisement, or rendition, a position is often adopted that material comfort, self-gratification, immediacy, self-indulgence, self-enhancement, self-worth, self-help, body-enhancement, performance-enhancement, consumer culture, Hollywood idol-worship, utopianism, risk-taking, sense-enhancement, bodily fitness, reality TV, therapy, aesthetics, environmentalism, animal rights, and generally, everything else in the Apollonian or Dionysian[34] worlds described by Nietzsche and more, represents those polytheistic gods to which the postmodern masses bow.

It should not be surprising that when religion today attempts to be as traditional as in the past, it is far less successful. The more orthodox churches abound with older generations of parishioners while many of the younger generations, if they attend services at all, opt for the mega church, complete with stadium or movie theater padded seating, live contemporary upbeat music, huge plasma display screens, lighting and sound effects, a star preacher, a message geared toward personal success or popular psychology, all following a visit to the in-house McDonald's or Starbucks for breakfast or morning coffee.

Cioran and Baudrillard would recognize the reality of the modern gods immediately. In a recent study by the Barna Group entitled, "Six Reasons Young Christians Leave the

[33] Adapted from the educational film and related materials, "From Modernity to Postmodernity: A Sociological Inquiry" *Films Media Group,* 1999.

[34] Nietzsche describes the Apollonian or Dionysian world in his *The Birth of Tragedy* (1871) stating: Up to this point, we have considered the Apollonian and its opposite, the Dionysian, as artistic forces which break forth out of nature itself, without the mediation of the human artist and in which the human artistic drive is for the time being satisfied directly — on the one hand as a world of dream images, whose perfection has no connection with an individual's high level of intellect or artistic education, on the other hand, as the intoxicating reality, which once again does not respect the individual, but even seeks to abolish the individual and to restore him through a mystic feeling of collective unity. In comparison to these unmediated artistic states of nature, every artist is an "Imitator," and, in fact, an artist either of Apollonian dream or Dionysian intoxication…

Church", it was found that younger people found the church was overprotecting, that Chirstianity is "shallow", that churches are antagonistic to science, that churches are judgmental and simplistic regarding sexuality, that Christianity views itself as having a monopoly on faith, and that churches are unfriendly to any doubt someone may have.[35]

Drew Dyck, in his book, *Generation Ex-Christian*, divides those who opt out of the traditional church into six categories: postmodern leavers, recoilers, modern leavers, neo-pagans, rebels, and drifters. In an increasingly fragmented and often cruel world with an uncertain future, many have become disillusioned with faith and God is guilty by association.[36] Today, traditional churches are trying to retool themselves and retailor their message to be more attractive to a postmodern audience, but as Baudrillard might say, simulating oneself is still a simulation in competition with endless alternative simulations while Cioran might chime in that the polytheistic appeal of some of those are infinitely more appealing.

On one final note regarding Cioran's belief that suffering and sacrificing for one's faith is a staple of all dogma, the postmodern worshipper still does. Financially, the "postmodern gods" are among the most expensive ever devised. From houses in the suburbs, to education, to nice clothes and cars, to all of the self-enhancements on the path to living a "successful" and "abundant" life, to the charitable contributions to postmodern causes, the postmodern disciples have made tithing look thrifty. Welcome to the next set of deities. The "postmodern gods" have taken the stage, and God has left the building.

Biographical Note

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[35] The Barna Group, *Six Reasons Young Christians Leave the Church.* Sept. 28, 2011. Accessed February 18, 2012. <http://www.barna.org/teens-next-gen-articles/528-six-reasons-young-christians-leave-church>.

[36] Vu, Michelle A. "Generation Ex-Christian: Why Young People are Leaving the Church" *Christianity Today.* January 7, 2011. Accessed February 17, 2012. <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/generation.exchristian.why.young.people.are.leaving.the.church/27324-2.htm>.

Jeremiah 29:11 as a 21st Century Church Paradigm

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In the 21st century evangelical church, Jer. 29:11 has become a ubiquitous presence. This ubiquity is evident with just a few Internet searches. A Google search for Jer. 29:11 results in approximately 122,000,000 hits. This number may sound exorbitant, but John 3:16 brings 169,000,000, Josh. 24:15 130,000,000, and Prov. 3:5 213,000,000 hits. The difference is that the latter three texts have been popular texts in the Christian church for generations. John 3:16 was the first verse learned by many Sunday School generations and Joshua 24:15 hangs on generations of kitchens. However, Jer. 29:11 is a relative newcomer to this list of popular Bible verses.

The present paper is an examination of the use of Jer. 29:11 in the church and Christian culture, with a view to understanding the bases for its popularity. The initial goal of this project was a broad look at the historical use of the verse. However, because of the ubiquity of the verse in popular Christian culture, this plan quickly proved to be too large a project. As an example of the ubiquity of the verse, in January 2011, while researching for this paper, a community magazine, *Living*, was delivered in my community with a devotional based on Jer. 29:11. The article is entitled, "No Coincidence," and insists that because of God's plan, there are no coincidences in life.[1] Therefore, a more modest study was undertaken. This paper will be a perusal of Jer. 29:11 in a variety of websites and blogs, beginning with churches and ministries, and then in the marketplace, with a view to understanding how this verse has become something of a paradigm for much of contemporary evangelical Christianity.

In the Church

For the purposes of this paper, "church" will be defined fairly broadly to include the local church and para-church ministries, including online ministries that could easily be called blogs or websites more than ministries. However, for this project, such a clear definition is unnecessary. One such ministry simply calls itself Jeremiah 29:11 Ministries. Jeremiah 29:11 Ministries is a family ministry that does music, camps, and youth and children's ministry in churches. They are a multi-generational itinerant ministry. Interestingly, neither their Facebook page nor website contains any reference to Jer. 29:11, except as a logo, or offers any explanation for the choice of the name for the ministry. This would suggest that they see the verse as a paradigmatic scripture text for their gospel ministry.[2]

From Oct. 31-Nov. 4, 2011, the Shiloh Temple Church of God in Christ in St. Louis had a series of blog entries based on Jer. 29:11, although nothing else on the church's

[1] Michele Wallace, "No Coincidence," *Living*, Cy-Fair edition (Jan. 2012): 22-23.

[2] See Jeremiah 29:11 Ministries, http://www.facebook.com/jeremiah2911ministries?sk=wall and Jeremiah 29:11 Ministries, http://www.jeremiah 2911ministries.com/jeremiah_2911.htm, both accessed 19 Feb 2012.

website mentions Jer. 29:11. The first blog focuses on "For I know," and compares God to a film director, having "the script for your life. He is the Casting Director. He determines who makes a cameo appearance and who will be the leading men and leading ladies. He determines supporting actors and actresses."[3] The second blog focuses on God's plan, which is absolute, even if it turns out to be a "deferred hope."[4] In the next blog entry, the focus turns to "you" in Jer. 29:11. The point of this entry is summed up in these words, "God has a plan for you. It is specifically for you. Not your friend. Not your mother or father. Not your sister or your brother. But it is specifically created for you."[5] Of course, this interpretation fails to take into consideration that the Hebrew second person forms in the verse are all plural. In the fourth blog entry, the same half verse is used to explain suffering as the discipline of God. God allows hurt in order to bring about his plan—a plan that is always good.[6] In the final blog, after quoting the last line of the verse, one blog entry begins with a definition of hope. "Hope is defined as 'to cherish a desire with anticipation.' What is that you desire? What is your 'hope'?"[7] As is typical of blogs, no source is cited for the definition of hope. After encouraging people to trust God for the future even during suffering, the blog includes an equally obscure definition of favor, "It means that you obtain victory after you have suffered for a season."[8] The emphasis of the blog is that God wants to give his followers their hopes and dreams, if they have the patience to wait for it. Clearly, in these blog entries, the church is encouraging people to be faithful to God and trust that he has plans for each individual, even if he or she cannot see the plan now. This is clearly a paradigmatic use of Jer. 29:11 as a basis for the Christian life.

While not a church or even technically a para-church ministry, *Charisma* magazine has served the charismatic and Pentecostal church since 1975,[9] so will be treated here as a ministry. A search of the magazine's website produced multiple pages from 2011 utilizing Jer. 29:11 in some fashion. Most of them are in the form of devotionals. A few of those will be examined here. R. T. Kendall's devotional on Oct. 9 encourages readers that God planned their lives and chose them from birth. Likewise, God has planned for them to be born again.[10] Thus, Jer. 29:11 is the basis for a teaching taken from Jer. 1 (known from birth) to God's plan for new birth, presumably from the New Testament.

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[3] Shiloh Temple COGIC, "The Director," http://shilohtemplecogic.wordpress.com/2011/10/, accessed 19 Feb 2012.

[4] Shiloh Temple COGIC, "The Grand Plan," http://shilohtemplecogic.wordpress.com/2011/11/01/the-grand-plan/, accessed 19 Feb 2012.

[5] Shiloh Temple COGIC, "Just for You," http://shilohtemplecogic.wordpress.com/2011/11/02/just-for-you/, accessed 19 Feb 2012.

[6] Shiloh Temple COGIC, "No Harm Done," http://shilohtemplecogic.wordpress.com/2011/11/03/no-harm-done/, accessed 19 Feb 2012.

[7] Shiloh Temple COGIC, "The End is Better than the Beginning," http://shilohtemplecogic.wordpress.com/2011/11/04/ the-end-is-better-than-the-beginning/, accessed 19 Feb 2012.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Charisma Media, "About Us," http://www.charismamedia.com/index.php/about-us, accessed 19 Feb 2012.

[10] R. T. Kendall, "God Has a Plan for You," *Charisma* (09 October 2011), online edition, http://www.charismamag.com/index.php/blogs/rt-kendall/23375-god-has-a-purpose-for-you, accessed 19 Feb 2012.

Three recent devotionals by Rod Parsley in *Charisma* contain portions of Jer. 29:11. All of them contain several scripture quotations about God's plans and challenge the follower of Jesus to push into God's plans (Whatever "push into God's plans" might mean). One of the devotionals focuses upon God's provision in his plan, which will deliver his followers from poverty.[11] The second calls on people to persevere and press through difficult times. Success in impossible situations shows God at work. Like the Hebrews in the wilderness, God's followers today cannot retreat to Egypt. They must be "moving forward in [God's] plans and purposes."[12] The third, from Feb. 15, 2012, emphasizes the victory that readers have in Christ—a victory that is part of God's plans, as described in Jer. 29:11.[13] Clearly, for Parsley, Jer. 29:11 is a foundational theological verse.

According to an Aug. 1, 2011, *Charisma* article, Sheila Schuller Coleman, pastor of Crystal Cathedral, quoted Jer. 29:11 in reference to the bankruptcy and possible sale of the famous church property. On July 31, 2011, the board of Crystal Cathedral voted not to choose a buyer for their property, deciding instead to trust God to meet the needs of the church. Since the church was in bankruptcy hearings with reported debts of $50 million, these needs were great. Coleman is quoted as stating, "We're asking our people to 'Walk by faith, not by sight and to believe God's promise and plan as found in Jeremiah 29:11-14."[14] While the economic downturn was blamed for the extreme debt leading to the bankruptcy, and certainly played a role, one wonders about the Schuller dynasty and the mindset that would allow a church to get $50 million in debt. Where was God's plan earlier? Here, Jer. 29:11 seems to be a smoke-screen to avoid fiscal responsibility.

A regular column in *Charisma*, "SpiritLed Woman," contains several references to Jer. 29:11, three of which will be mentioned here. In Dec. 2010, Amie Streater wrote an article concerning avoiding debt and Christmas giving. She quotes Jer. 29:11 to remind readers of "God's amazing plan" for each person's life. She tells her readers that the reason people fail to find God's prosperous future is "counterfeit convictions." She is never completely clear about what these counterfeit convictions are, although two appear to be the

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[11] Rod Parsley, "God Has a Plan," *Charisma* (08 August 2011), online edition, http://www.charismamag.com/index.php/newsletters/daily-devotionals/daily-breakthroughs/22755-our-father-has-a-plan, accessed 19 Feb 2012.

[12] Ibid., "Straight Ahead," *Charisma* (09 February 2012), online edition, http://www.charismamag.com/index.php/newsletters/daily-devotionals/daily-breakthroughs/18411-straight-ahead, accessed 20 Feb 2012.

[13] Ibid., "Our Victory Flag," *Charisma* (15 February 2012), online edition, http://www.charismamag.com/index.php/newsletters/daily-devotionals/daily-breakthroughs/18488-our-victory-flag, accessed 19 Feb 2012.

[14] John Charles, "Crystal Cathedral Not for Sale," *Charisma* (01 August 2011), online edition, http://www.charismamag.com/index.php/news-old/31680-crystal-cathedral-not-for-sale, accessed 20 Feb 2012. The property did eventually sale to the Catholic Diocese of Orange, with the sale completed on Feb. 3, 2012. One article stated that the board decided to support this sale because at least the property would remain a church. See Nicole Santa Cruz, Ruben Vives and Mitchell Landsberg, "Crystal Cathedral Congregants 'Devastated' by Church Sale," *Los Angeles Times* (18 Nov 2011), online edition, http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/lanow/2011/11/crystal-cathedral-congregants-devastated-by-church-sale.html, accessed 20 Feb 2012, and Nicole Santa Cruz, "Crystal Cathedral announces changes to TV-ministries board," *Los Angeles Times* (16 Feb 2012), online edition, http://articles.latimes.com/2012/feb/16/local/la-me-crystal-cathedral-20120216, accessed 20 Feb 2012. Perhaps God's plan was enacted, after all.

pull to buy Christmas gifts and the belief that God is mad at us for sin. She also suggests that readers purchase her book, *Your Money God's Way*.[15] In another article, Iverna Tompkins argues that people fail to live in God's presence because they fail to have faith in the great promises of God, such as Jer. 29:11.[16] Tompkins equates the promise of God in Jer. 29:11 to God's presence with his people. In the third example, Margie Hoomes compares the Christian life to a bonsai tree. Like the bonsai tree, which is a tree designed to stay much smaller than the normal trees of its species, Christians are often bound into a pot that is much smaller than originally intended. The lies of "the enemy of your soul" keep a person from reaching full potential, like that described in Jer. 29:11.[17]

One final *Charisma* article concerns the movie "Soul Surfer," which is the story of Bethany Hamilton, a star professional surfer whose arm was severed in a shark attack. The story is essentially a report of an interview with Sarah Hill, Bethany's youth leader, who was a fairly prominent role in the movie. Ms. Hill relates that when she was rushing to the hospital after the accident, she thought of Jer. 29:11, which she shared with Bethany after the surgery. Ms. Hill states that Bethany clung to the promises of the verse, helping her to return to the top of the professional surfing world.[18] In the actual movie, the role of Jer. 29:11 was not as prominent. In fact, Bethany struggled with the meaning of this verse in her life, eventually coming to a more nuanced view of the verse, allowing for both faith in God and suffering. This variety of approaches to interpreting Jer. 29:11 found in these church and ministry sites will continue into the blogosphere and personal websites, to which the paper now turns.

Blogs and Websites

The use of Jer. 29:11 on the Internet is almost beyond comprehension. Since Facebook has become ubiquitous, the review will begin there. There is a Facebook page simply entitled, "Jeremiah 29:11—For I Have Plans for You."[19] The picture on the page has an advertisement for BibleStudyTools.com, suggesting that it is a marketing ploy. The info page of the Facebook profile includes the NIV of Jer. 29:11 and a link to http://www.biblestudy tools.com/jeremiah/29-11.html, which is a page with links to public-domain study resources for Jer. 29. On the Facebook page are a series of posts of pictures and sayings designed to encourage readers to know that God has a plan, even if it not what

[15] Amie Streater, "No More Plastic Holidays!," *Charisma* (15 December 2010), online edition, http://www.charismamag.com/index.php/newsletters/spiritled-woman-e-magazine/29776-no-more-plastic-holidays, accessed 20 Feb 2012.

[16] Iverna Tompkins, "God Are You Really There?," *Charisma* (01 March 2012), online edition, http://www.charismamag.com/index.php/newsletters/spiritled-woman-e-magazine/30348-god-are-you-really-there, accessed 20 Feb 2012.

[17] Margie Hoomes, "Come Out of Confinement," *Charisma*, online edition, http://www.charismamag.com/index.php/charisma-channels/women/31278-come-out-of-confinement, accessed 20 Feb 2012. The article is undated, but the comments begin in June 2011.

[18] Janet Chismar, "Walking Alongside a Soul Surfer," *Charisma* (13 April 2011), online edition, http://www.charismamag.com/index.php/news-old/30689-walking-alongside-a-soul-surfer, accessed 20 Feb 2012.

[19] "Jeremiah 29:11 For I Have Plans for You," http://www.facebook.com/ForIHavePlansForYou?sk=info, accessed 20 Feb 2012.

one expected, since his plan is always correct. For example, one post is a quote attributed to John Piper, "God has no afterthoughts. Every plan is Plan A. If He changes the trajectory, that was His plan." There is also a link to an animated video of the verse.[20] Several quotes attributed to Tony Evans encourage readers to be faithful and persistent even in difficult times.

Moving to the more prevalent reference to Jer. 29:11 in blogs, Jules Smith writes:

> God tells us in Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you…they are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." This verse was instrumental in my growth as a person and a "listener" this past year. It is so reassuring to me that God knows the plans he has for me. I find such comfort in that, but what I had to learn was that if I don't listen to God as he guides me, I will not hear those plans, I will not follow his will and I will not live out the future he has for me.[21]

Her use of a translation other than NIV and focus on paying attention to God of leading into his plans is refreshing.

On his blog, Ozzie Cole argued that Christians should never entertain the thought of a bad day. There are no "rainy days and Mondays" for believers. His basis for this statement is Rom 8:28 and Jer. 29:11. He states, "God has a purpose for everyone. His plans are for us to prosper, and not be harmed, to have hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11). So why are you allowing the devil to feed you his garbage, to suppress your joy?"[22] One wonders if the exiles in Babylon in the sixth century BCE would have agreed with this blogger.

On Kisha's Daily Devotional blog (no other name given), she makes this statement:

> If you are looking for a husband or a wife, then stop! Don't you realize that if God has already predestined your life then he already has your mate chosen? Jeremiah 29:11 says "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." But he can't send them if your way is blocked with run down cars that are on flat. In order to receive a blessing, you have to remove those things that are keeping you from getting them.[23]

Kisha has taken a new direction, applying Jer. 29:11 to dating and marriage. God's plan in Jer. 29:11 includes his choice of a mate!

In a blog entitled, "Kingdom Princess," Afiya Duncanson connects Jer. 29:11 with a call to use the gifts given by God to help others. The point seems to be that God's desire

[20] "God's Plans," http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=DGYPKGNX&utm_source= facebook&utm_medium= fbpage&utm_ campaign=dailyupdate. Accessed 18 Feb 2012.

[21] Jules Smith, "Listen," http://liftupavoice.wordpress.com/2011/12/18/listen-2/, accessed 18 Feb 2012.

[22] Oswald Cole, "Bad Days," http://hopeenlightenment.com/2011/09/23/bad-days/, accessed 18 Feb 2012.

[23] Lakisha, "Is That a Revolving Door," http://kishasdailydevotional.wordpress.com/ 2011/12/15/daily-devotional-is-that-a-revolving-door/, accessed 18 Feb 2012.

that his followers have no "ordinary life," as promised in Jer. 29:11, depends upon the use of the gifts that God has given. She writes, "God wants to prosper you in every area of your life. God not only wants to bless you but He wants you to be a blessing."[24] The idea of being a blessing rather than simply receiving a blessing is at least refreshing.

In her blog entitled, "godsplanforme—Jeremiah 29:11," Kathy Freeland begins with the story of her father's sudden death 10 days before her high school graduation. She argues that the verse reminds God's people that he has a plan for them, even when the plans are unexpected and the journey unknown. She states, "He has plans for us to prosper and to have hope. He has an awesome future, one beyond our belief, ready for us. Plans of good, not of harm. I don't want to miss one second of that great experience coming. And I don't want you to miss a second of the experiences He has coming your way."[25] The reader is never too sure where her father's death fits into the discussion—whether it was part of God's plan or not.

Richard Rice, a pastor and author, in his blog entitled, "Where Living Begins," uses Jer. 29:11 to encourage followers of God to stop accepting mediocrity. He concludes his blog:

> God desires nothing but good in my life – not just good, but the very good; it's me who rejects His goodness for the ho-hum. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11, NKJV). If God's intentions and plans for us are for a peaceful, good, hope-filled future, let's not settle for anything but God's ultimate best in our lives.[26]

Rice's use of the NKJV removes the theme of prosperity, moving instead to "peace" and "good." Interestingly, he moves from "peace" to "not just good, but the very good." One might wonder if Gen. 1 is creeping in to his thinking here. However, his emphasis on God's plans of hope and goodness is a refreshing change.

In her blog, Ali Gatewood, a senior at Southern Methodist University, begins her discussion of Jer. 29:11 with a quotation from Sophie Scholl, a young member of the German resistance during WWII who was eventually arrested and executed by the Nazis. The quote is a call to live life with purpose lest one miss the "one great joy" and gain only "piffling treasures." She is emphasizing the need to trust God, since he has made his plans. However, the connection of these words from Ms. Scholl with Jer. 29:11 is fairly difficult to find.

Anthonette Anderson, on her blog entitled, "Tonirand's Blog," begins by discussing a difficult time in life that she has endured. She encourages others in similar circumstances to

[24] Afiya Duncanson, "Be a Vessel for God," http://akingdomprincess.wordpress.com /2011/12/07/be-a-vessel-for-god/, accessed 18 Feb 2012.

[25] Kathi Freeland, "Blink," http://godsplansforme.wordpress.com/2011/11/26/jeremiah-2911/#comments, accessed 18 Feb 2012.

[26] Richard Rice, "Settling for Second Best," http://calvaryopenbible.wordpress.com /2011/11/22/settling-for-second-best/, accessed 18 Feb 2012.

trust in God for the future, as she is endeavoring to do. In the prayer at the end of her blog, she states:

> I am thankful that You have not left me alone. I don't like this place of uncertainty, but I know that Your plans for me "are good … and prosperous," so I will trust You to carry me over the issues I cannot walk through and I trust You to keep me covered when the winds of adversity blow. I am safe and protected in You, even when I don't feel like it.[27]

This is an obviously reference to Jer. 29:11 and not a quotation, with "good … and prosperous" in quotations, but without a reference given (however, Jeremiah 29:11 was included in the tags for the blog).

Two Latter Day Saints missionaries include this quote in their blog:

> Heavenly Father has a very specific plan for each of us. He knows where He wants us to go, what he wants us to learn, how He wants us to feel, and the purpose He wants us to fulfill. He's watching me, and you, very closely to see how we're doing and what we might need to help us along the way.[28]

This post focuses on God's leading in life. After quoting Jer. 29:11, they wrote, "He's begging us to let Him help us."[29]

In her blog, Heather King introduces a quotation of the NIV of Jer. 29:11 with this statement:

> When we feel the hopelessness of a bleak unpromising future, we can remember that God doesn't intend to abandon any of us along the journey. He doesn't grow bored with our progress and forget to complete our story.[30]

Using the stories of Hagar and Abraham, she then focuses upon God's leadership in the lives of his people. She concludes, "He'll be faithful to complete your story, carrying you forward on this journey even when you can't tell you're moving. That's because He has a plan to give you a hope and a future."[31] This is an interesting intertextual approach to the verse.

Andrew Summey's blog takes an interesting and unique (at least to this study) approach to Jer. 29:11. He argues that the text is about the return of the Jews to Israel—and that alone. Therefore, Christians who desire to share in the hopeful future of the verse will align with the future of Israel and the Jews in their homeland. After all, Israel's national

[27] Anthonette Anderson, "Who's Watching You," http://tonirand.wordpress.com/2011/11/21/whos-watching-you/, accessed 18 Feb 2012.

[28] Jayci Barrus and Jenelle Willis, "It's Your Move," http://pausetouplift.wordpress.com/2011/11/12/its-your-move/, accessed 19 Feb 2012.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Heather King, "Lessons from the Theatre, Part 1," http://heathercking.wordpress.com/2011/11/14/lessons-from-the-theater/, accessed 19 Feb 2012.

[31] Ibid.

anthem, "HaTikvah," means "the hope."[32] This is the only blog found in this search that referenced modern Israel or that used the Net Bible translation.

Mike Fisk's blog also used a different translation, the New Century Version, which reads, "'I say this because I know what I am planning for you,' says the Lord. 'I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you. I will give you hope and a good future.'" Most of his fairly long post on the verse encourages readers that God has a plan for every individual, no matter where the person might find himself. However, at the end, he is the only blog in this research to emphasize the missional nature of Jer. 29:7, which calls on the exiles to make the best life possible in exile, seeking good for Babylon, which will result in good for them also.[33] The paucity of recognition of this emphasis in Jer. 29 is interesting, with all the publications on missional church in the past decade.

In an expected turn, some of the blogs and websites have little to do with the verse, but use it for a title or thematic verse. Debbie Huffaker entitled her blog Jeremiah 29:11 not because she utilizes the verse regularly, but because the focus of her life and ministry is hope.[34] Another Facebook page is entitled "Jeremiah 29:11 is My Favorite Bible Verse." It is listed as a community, but consists solely of quotes, none of which relate to Jer. 29:11.[35] Another Facebook page is titled, "We love you Britt-Britt - Keep looking up! Jeremiah 29:11." The page was created to encourage Brittany Hawley, who is a teenager with a serious nerve disorder. Since Jer. 29:11 is not mentioned in the description of the Facebook page, apparently the title is meant to suggest that Brittany should be encouraged because of God's plan for her life.[36] Another Facebook page entitled Jeremiah 29:11 includes nothing but quotes of the NIV of Jer. 29:11 and parts thereof.[37] These web pages certainly present Jer. 29:11 as a paradigmatic verse for the Christian life.

Many blogs and websites have arisen in recent years calling for a more balanced and contextual reading of Jer. 29:11. One of these is the unsigned website entitled Jeremiah 29:11, which contains the statement,

> It is important, imperative actually, that we understand the context of passages from the Bible. In studying the context of Jeremiah 29:11, I feel I have a better understanding of the true meaning. Even if you omit the contextualized words "plans to prosper you and not to harm you", I believe

[32] Andrew Summey, "Do You Know the 'Good Plans' of Jeremiah 29:11?," http://andrewsummey.com/2011/10/29/do-you-know-the-good-plans-in-jeremiah-2911/, accessed 19 Feb 2012.

[33] Mike Fisk, "His Plans for You Are Good," http://builtwithgrace.wordpress.com/2011/10/29/his-plans-for-you-are-good/, accessed 19 Feb 2012.

[34] "Jeremiah Twenty Nine Eleven," http://www.jeremiah-2911.com/ and "Jeremiah 29:11," http://www.facebook.com/29.11.Jeremiah, accessed 18 Feb 2012.

[35] "Jeremiah 29:11 is My Favorite Bible Verse," http://www.facebook.com/pages/Jeremiah-2911-is-my-favorite-Bible-verse/106573402712741, accessed 18 Feb 2012.

[36] "We Love You Britt. Britt Keep Looking Up," http://www.facebook.com/pages/We-love-you-Britt-Britt-Keep-looking-up-Jeremiah-2911/245007075522796?sk=info, accessed 18 Feb 2012.

[37] "Jeremiah 29:11," http://www.facebook.com/pages/Jeremiah-2911/148096041890685?sk=wall, accessed 18 Feb 2012.

> this verse still has a very powerful message: God knows us personally, has a plan for us, and allows us to find hope in Him.[38]

Interestingly, after demanding a contextual reading of the verse, the writer ignores the grammar of the verse, making it a promise to every individual, when no singular second person form occurs in the Hebrew of the verse. The website is one page, with footnotes of blogs and websites that contain references to many other blogs and websites concerning Jer. 29:11.

On a blog entitled, "Christian Resources for Churches," the author uses Jer. 29:11 to encourage high school and college graduates in their future life. The unnamed author encourages the graduates to remember that God has plans and is present with them wherever they are. The author also warns against seeing the verse as a promise of prosperity. These young people are challenged to surrender to God totally to let God lead them into their futures prepared by God.[39]

In a similar mode, Joy Patton emphasizes the importance of Jer. 29:12-13 in understanding v. 11. Joy Patton is an author and women's ministry leader in her church. She explained that the times that she encountered God in her life were not when she was concerned with God's plan or purpose, but when she was seeking to know God. She concludes her blog, "The truth is he wants your heart because when he has your heart and you know his voice, then he can take your feet anywhere he needs them to go. God wants us to depend on him, not just for the big picture, but for every step, every breath, along the way."[40]

In his blog entitled, "The Renewed Imagination," Ryan Golias argues that Jer. 29:11 is not a promise for immediate blessing from God, blessing for those who seek to be prosperous, physical blessing for those alive, or mainly for physical or personal well-being. He concludes that, "It is better than a promise to restore fortunes and lands and people; God promise to restore us to himself. What better future and hope?"[41] In the verses immediately following Jer. 29:11, God states that when his people seek him they will be found.

On his Scripture Zealot blog, Jeff (the only name supplied) argues that the context should dissuade the modern reader from making Jer. 29:11 into an individual promise, suggesting that other texts may do this, but not Jer. 29:11. He also included a quoted critique of Rick Warren's *The Purpose-Driven Life*,[42] which includes several statements about the purposes of God. The reviewer suggests that if Jer. 29:11 is a promise to each of

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[38] http://www.jeremiah2911.com/, accessed 18 Feb 2012. A link on the website takes the reader to the author, Eric Martin. See www.ericmmartin.com.

[39] Kerry Egan, "Jeremiah 29:11 – We Have Hope and a Future When We Live for Christ," http://christianresourcesforchurches.wordpress.com/2011/12/09/jeremiah-2911-we-have-hope-and-a-future-when-we-live-for-christ/, accessed 18 Feb. 2012.

[40] Joy Patton, "Purpose from a Personal Encounter – Purpose Part 3," http://joypatton.wordpress.com/2011/11/22/purpose-from-a-personal-encounter/, accessed 18 Feb 2012.

[41] Ryan Golias, "What Jeremiah 29:11 Is Not About," http://www.renewedimagination.com/2010/01/what-jeremiah-2911-is-not-about.html, accessed 18 Feb 2012.

[42] Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002). One might wonder about the influence of *The Purpose-Driven Life* on the popularity of Jer. 29:11, but the research to this point has not shown any other connection between the use of the verse and Warren's book.

us, then possibly Jer. 44:27 should also be. "For I am watching over them for harm, not for good; the Jews in Egypt will perish by sword and famine until they are all destroyed" (NIV). The reviewer suggested that this verse would not sell as many plaques as Jer. 29:11.[43] This is certainly a true statement, and leads to the final section of this research, a look at Jer. 29:11 in the marketplace.

In the Marketplace

The marketplace tends to be both a reflection and a catalyst of culture. Therefore, a look at Jer. 29:11 in the marketplace may prove instructive.[44] A multitude of products with this verse printed on them are available. A search of Amazon produced this list. In the area of artwork, one might purchase a blanket, a canvas print, posters, and wall hangings. Several books have been written based on Jer. 29:11, as well as bookmarks to keep the reader's place in the book. One of these bookmarks is a promise to graduates. Churches can find Jer. 29:11 on Sunday bulletins. Friends and parents can purchase plaques and frames for their graduates. Perhaps an iPhone cover, a journal, or a key chain is more appropriate. For the coffee drinkers, mugs are available. For the office, one might need a paperweight. If jewelry is desired, the shopper will find several rings with Jer. 29:11 inscribed. If someone is looking for new music, several CDs are available with Jer. 29:11 in the title. This quick perusal is not meant to denigrate those who produce or sale these items. It does, however, point out the ubiquity of this Bible verse in today's Christian culture. Before drawing conclusions about the significance of Jer. 29:11 in that culture, a brief study of the verse may prove helpful.

Jeremiah 29:11

A literal translation of the verse is: "For I certainly know the plans that I am planning for you, says the LORD—plans for well-being, not evil—to give to you a hopeful future (lit., a future and a hope)." One will note that this differs significantly from the most popular version—the NIV translation: "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" For the sake of the present study, a few brief comments on the differences in these two translations will sufficiently present my understanding of the verse. First, "plans" is emphatic, with the Hebrew verb used once and the cognate noun used twice in the verse. Second, the verb "know" at the beginning of the verse includes an emphatic pronoun. These two points would suggest that the focus of the verse is related to God's plans and the fact that there should be no doubt that God has plans. Third, the "you" in this verse is plural. The lack of a plural second person in English is a constant problem in exegesis of the Hebrew Bible. Fourth, since the verse ends with a declaration that the future is hopeful, the emphasis of the verse becomes God's positive future plans for his people.

[43] Jeff, "Jeremiah 29:11," http://www.scripturezealot.com/2008/02/25/jeremiah-2911/, accessed 18 Feb 2012.

[44] Most of this section will be visual and not lend itself to written form.

In light of our study of the use of Jer. 29:11 in the contemporary church, interpretive issues arise immediately. Probably most important for this study, the promise is not to an individual. The promise is to the people of Judah, or Israel, in exile in Babylon. Perusing the context reveals that the verse was spoken to a defeated, defeatist, and hopeless people. God is assuring them that he has not forgotten them. However, God also makes it plain that the hopeful future will not be easy, soon, or as they wanted—in direct contrast to the reading of this verse in *The Message*, which concludes the verse with "the future you hoped for." They would struggle to make a home in exile, and only after 70 years would the hoped-for return home come—after they had all died. Thus, one should not read this verse as a promise of the great things that God has planned for one's life.

So, what is the point of this verse, then? The paper that I presented in an earlier session today argued that the point is found in the words translated "welfare" and "evil," or "prosper" and "harm" above. The Hebrew words used here are שָׁלוֹם (*shalom*) and רָעָה (*ra'ah*). Detailed exegesis is not the point of this paper, but the importance of these words is apropos to this study. The Book of Jeremiah uses these two words more than any other book in the Bible (31 and 122 times respectively, the latter including all forms of the root word). In Jer. 29:11, God is assuring the people that he desires to give them *shalom* and not *ra'ah*. However, their current suffering in exile is a result of the evil (*ra'ah* in Jeremiah) that they had committed, which resulted in God bringing disaster (*ra'ah*) upon them. This verse should teach the followers of God that bad (i.e. *ra'ah*) is sometimes necessary, but those followers of God should know that God's ultimate desire is the best (*shalom*) for his people. However, that *shalom* is predicated by a certain lifestyle and level of obedience to God. The Bible is plain that God's plans are not humanity's plans (e.g. Gen. 50:20 and Is. 55:8). This verse simply assures God's people that he has a plan, and that the plan is for a hopeful future for his people, perhaps well into the future.

Conclusion

As a final piece of this study, the above perusal of contemporary use and the study of the context and meaning of the verse demand some attempt at reconciliation or explanation for the impossibility of reconciliation. This conclusion will move in two directions. First, many people are indeed using Jer. 29:11 wisely and appropriately as a reminder that God does have a plan and ultimately that plan is for a hopeful future. Also, a certain backlash to the use of the verse as a personal mantra is evident in several blogs and online articles. The latter phenomenon is particularly positive. At least many are recognizing the popular shallow, trite use of the verse. Unfortunately, many of these criticisms seem to be attacks on the teachings of prosperity gospel rather than attempts to actually understand the verse. The use, and abuse, of Jer. 29:11 extends far beyond the borders of prosperity gospel churches into virtually every corner of contemporary Christendom. A final critique of the use of the verse is needed to conclude this paper.

Perhaps the most important critique of the use of Jer. 29:11 today is the tendency toward individualizing the verse. Of course, individualization is a pervasive tendency in all of biblical interpretation. This is the tendency to make everything about the individual, when most of the Bible is about the community. Walter Brueggemann calls this the "me and

Jesus" tendency.[45] This study demonstrated a propensity to make the verse address every individual instead of the community of God's people. Perhaps the worst example of making Jer. 29:11 both individual and trite is the Message version of the verse, "I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for." While Eugene Peterson likely did not intend this result, the verse now becomes a promise from God to do what I want. This was, indeed, the nuance of many readings of the verse in the above study. In this sense, the verse often becomes a sort of mantra to keep a person from despair and to build a person's faith. This was clearly seen in the *Charisma* articles and several websites and blogs. The growth of what has come to be labeled "prosperity gospel" has certainly added to this tendency. This common use of Jer. 29:11 supports the premise of this project—that the verse has become a paradigm for Christian living among many Christians.

One of the premises of this study was that the NIV has had a significant impact on the popularity of this verse. Proving the connection remains elusive. However, the fact that the overwhelming majority of quotations—on websites, blogs, magazines, and paraphernalia—are from the NIV would seem to support this hypothesis, even if only anecdotally. The choice of the NIV translators to use "prosper" has almost certainly affected the use of the verse. Plans for "peace," "welfare," or "good" do not sound nearly as appealing as plans "to prosper." In the current American culture of consumerism and commodification, the infatuation with prosperity in the Bible was likely unavoidable. While the rampant use of Jer. 29:11 to support this consumeristic mentality is disappointing; however, the backlash toward reading the text contextually is promising. Lest the conclusion sound too negative, the desire that people have to know and find the plans of God is also encouraging. Unfortunately, Jer. 29:11 has indeed become a paradigm for abuse of scripture and a mantra for seeking a positivistic, prosperity-centered interpretation of the biblical text.

Biographical Note

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[45] Walter Brueggemann, *A Pathway of Interpretation: The Old Testament for Pastors and Students* (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2009), 18.

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Habits of the Contra-Evangelistic Church Culture: An Analysis of Thorstein Veblen's Theory of Conspicuous Waste in the Ecclesiastical Context

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Introduction

The paper appropriates Veblen's concept of "conspicuous waste" as a common practice in the Western Christian Church which has the latent consequence of cultivating and reproducing an antisocial and "contra-evangelistic" predatory class within the church. Through the public display of prestige, social congregational exploitation prevails with the culminating effect of disenfranchising faithful members while repelling prospects and "seekers." The self-coined term "contra-evangelism" refers to the process of driving people away from the church and Christianity and ultimately dismantling its fundamental fabric primarily through various forms "predatory practices." First, "habits of the mind" induces a fear of change, which results in a passive acceptance of the proliferation of predatory behaviors. While much literature on evangelism focus on church growth, conversions, and proselytizing, this paper will focus on theoretically identifying the causes behind the steady decline in mainline church membership such that the "bleeding" can become deterred. Second, Veblen's synthesis implied that society has been on an increased trajectory of becoming further mechanized. The proposed solution entails fostering a church culture which embraces cooperation over competition.

With respect to the "instinct of workmanship", "parental bent", and "instinct of idle curiosity", Veblen rejects the principle that humans are asocial and self-centered. This paper provides examples of how members of the upper social class symbolically communicate their superior status to one another and the rest of society through "conspicuous leisure." Examples include public displays of honor and shame through awards and banquets. Members of the upper social class symbolically communicate their superior status to one another and the rest of society through

Introduction to "Contra-evangelism"

Active recruitment or evangelism functions as a key feature of Christianity. Specifically, Western church culture typically devotes a significant amount of attention and resources if available to missions, church growth, evangelism, and outreach such that the manifold goals include "making disciples" in addition to institutional expansion. Workshops, seminars, conferences, and volumes of literature targeted for clergy and lay leadership emphasizes evangelism. Yet, a significant part of evangelism lays in its opposing dynamic best described as "contra-evangelism." The factors which repels people away from the church receives relatively little attention at least in part because growing, stagnant, and declining churches collective assume that they do not play an active role in driving people out or away.

Veblen's synthesis implies that churches unconsciously exist on a trajectory increasingly resembling corporations such that they aim at profit, pecuniary interests and "conspicuous consumption." As a result their interests shift away from the people in the congregation and the "unchurched" in which they consciously seek to reach.

There lays great difficulty in detecting the practice of "contra-evangelism" because its practice does not appear directly, but rather broad and subtle as a by-product of habits.

> Veblen's reference to cognitive and emotive forms as "habit" was meant to convey three basic ideas: They occur without rational reflection. They appear to be in congruity with, and in fact, form the basis of, commonsense understanding among the people in question. They are resistant to change and tend to persist for a time even after the material conditions that give rise to them have disappeared.[1]

Because habits frequently occur subconsciously, the church if not mindful has a high degree of vulnerability to its obliviousness in practicing "contra-evangelism" by means of "conspicuous consumption." Among the greatest challenges to sound theological reflection lays in the fact that habits have more emotive than rational indicators.

Habits of the Mind

The practice which produces "contra-evangelism" correlates with both "habits of the mind" and religious expression through cultural exclusivism. "The largest most widespread barrier that keeps people from faith is the culture barrier."[2] Evangelism has wrestled with and remains inconclusive with the issue of whether or not conversion implies denying the culture of orientation for a "socially constructed" version of a "church-folk" culture, which in essence may easily lack authenticity for the prospect. The problem arises when the issue becomes a matter of conformity of taste and style rather than a faith journey.

> For example, they are alienated when they overhear church people using an "alien language" or a "pious jargon." The jargon problem cuts several ways, and the technical jargon of desk theologians, the revival jargon of the late-nineteenth century, and the "politically correct" jargon of the late –twentieth century all have similar alienating effects.[3]

The message received in such "contra-evangelistic" contexts lays in the idea that regardless of faith development or spiritual growth, unless the individual acquires the additional "pecuniary knowledge" then they become increasingly prone to having a marginalized status in the church.

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[1] Ashley, David and David Michael Orenstein. *Sociological Theory: Classical Statements 5th ed.* (Needham Heights, MA: Pearson, 2001) 359.
[2] Hunter, George C III. *Church for the Unchurched* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996) 59.
[3] Hunter, George C III. *Church for the Unchurched* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996) 59.

The described elements of conventional church culture derive directly from "habits of the mind" without significant questioning or theological reflection. Veblen describes "habits of the mind" as habitual though process which derive from repetitive activity. As ideas and information continue to advance, the descriptive behaviors of "church culture" persist because "habits of mind" resist change despite evidence. There lays a tendency for declining churches to deny that the church could possibly be dying, with the assumption that an "invisible hand" will restore the once vibrant congregation of the past. Veblen emphasized that "habits of the mind" become routine and culturally normative and eventually culturally mandatory. "Once cultural norms emerge, they both form the basic common stock of knowledge of a people and are strengthened as they are passed down to later generations through socialization."[4]

Defined by "Conspicuous Consumption" and "Conspicuous Waste"

The practice of "conspicuous consumption" and "conspicuous waste" permeates Western church culture because a part of church culture thrives on attaining prestige beyond mere utility. Retreats, seminars, and banquets accompany the unintentional consequence of making a public display of honor and shame because such events by design either inconveniences or excludes non-members of the "leisure class." First, the three events require its participants to have the luxury of a significant amount residual time for non-productive use. Sectors of the "industrious class" which consists of the greater mass; however, do participate in the three, yet their participation functions as "self-sacrificial" and poses a risk to their livelihood. Second, participation in such activities requires surplus wealth, which becomes self-evident through attendance.

The concept of "Sunday's Best" implies the practice of "conspicuous consumption." In traditional worship settings, proper attire entails imitating the taste and style of the "leisure class." For a few hours the congregants discard as many forms of "symbolic industriousness" as possible for the sake of conforming to the ecclesiastical folkways. Although cleanliness in dress serves the purpose of expressing reverence for the sacred, "Sunday's best" also includes accessories and vestiges beyond practical use. Beyond, neatness of appearance which indicates time away from industrious labor, "conspicuous waste" in the form of extra clothing and hair embellishments "shows that the wearer is not under the necessity of earning a livelihood, the evidence of social worth is enhanced in a very considerable degree." [5]Veblen argued that over time, the "industrious class" would imitate the "leisure class" which in turn would eventually profane and devalue the "conspicuous waste." Consequentially, such ecclesiastical traditions which incorporate practices of "conspicuous consumption" and "conspicuous waste" which cause internal and

[4] Ashley, David and David Michael Orenstein. *Sociological Theory: Classical Statements 5th ed.* (Needham Heights, MA: Pearson, 2001) 359.

[5] Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of The Leisure Class*, (New York, NY: Viking Press, 1967) 170.

external marginalization, turns the sanctuary a place intended for physical and spiritual refuge into a house for insatiable and self-effacing shame for the excluded.

Mechanized Church Culture

Based on Veblen's synthesis, church culture like most other major institutions exists on a trajectory of becoming increasingly mechanized. Although Western Christian Churches lack homogeneity, within the nature social institutions habits produce standard operating procedures and routines. Over time the standardization of fundamental operations because difficult to question or scrutinize. Modernity has demonstrated that "church culture" contains "cultural lag" symptoms. Cultural lag refers to the idea that technological advances, discoveries, scientific progress, and information change at a faster rate than other relative aspects of the culture. The collective contributions of modernity have challenges and made some religious assumptions obsolete.[6] Theologian William Abraham argued that modernity has not only eroded the significance of religion in civic society, but has alters Western thought.

> Taking modernity as a change in the intellectual map of the West, the process of erosion has proceeded both directly. Directly it has undermined the kind of basic theological undermined the kind of theological agenda out of which evangelism most naturally arises. It rendered obsolete the supernaturalism behind classical thinking about evangelism by calling into question the doctrines of sin, of Christ, and of the work of the Holy Spirit, and the like, which had been assumed in the proclamation of the gospel and the initiation of people into the church.[7]

With respect to Abraham's claim, a significant amount of evangelism theorist and practitioners have underestimated the influence of modernity.

Modernity has no intellectual explanation regarding eschatological perspectives or the role eschatology plays in evangelism or its opposite "contra-evangelism." Just as evangelism has a close relationship with eschatological perspectives, contra-evangelism also entails the same perspectives as the basis. Five distinct types of eschatological categories requires consideration when examining that which drives congregants out of the church, and repels the "un-churched." The five types include: spiritualized, repatriation, secessionists, egalitarian-assimilation, and nihilism.

Spiritualized Eschatology and Contra-Evangelism

The spiritualized eschatological perspective plays a significant role in Christian practical theology across the ecumenical community. Such a perspective entails that the ultimate

[6] Ogburn, William F. *Social Change with Respect to Culture and Human Nature*. (New York, NY: Huebsch, 1922).

[7] Abraham, William J. *The Logic of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989) 189.

goal of the human creature's spiritual journey resides in a final destination upon death, using justification by grace through the Atonement as the basis. Such beliefs serve as the bedrock of Christian theology. However, the problem with the truncated version of the "spiritualized eschatological perspective" arises when it eclipses the significance of life in this world. As eternal needs persists from a Christian perspective, an unintended consequence of its overemphasis lays in "turn a deaf ear" to the laments of acute human suffering, inhumane injustices, and reckless stewardship of the earth's resources in which humanity had been commanded to "subdue and have dominion." [8]

The door for "contra-evangelism" opens when "eternal justification" contributes to a culture of individualist egoism within the church, and apostasy. The culture of individualist egoism within the context of the church entails a collective belief in the ideal that theology must be compatible with self-interest. In such cases, when self-interest encounters challenges through theological mandates, then theological revisionism becomes the option for reconciling the difference. When practiced on a large scale, the church becomes less attractive for those in search of authentic compassion, which impacts the individual's spiritual well-being. For example, the genuine "seeker" receives contrasting messages when the environment professes faith, but witnesses or becomes victimized by common practices of *loshon hora* (derogatory speech), or its kin *rechilus* (idle speech, usual a form of gossip), within the context of "Christian fellowship." The banner of "Christian fellowship" frequently incorporates Veblen's concept of the symbolic representation of social class. "Small talk" exposes rules of etiquette and proper knowledge on individual's level of refinement and aesthetic cultivation. As a result, un-mindful "small talk" becomes exclusive and "contra-evangelistic." Apostasy can arise when the individual's sense of assurance of salvation stirs unrighteous living. Such behaviors arise when a person believes that eternal security equates to a license for lifestyle ranging from lack of generosity to debauchery, since what happens on earth no longer matters.

Secessionist Eschatology and Contra-Evangelism

The "secessionist" eschatological perspective entails the belief that societal renunciation either in whole or partially, functions as a prerequisite to salvation or liberation. Such theological beliefs frequently appear in sectarian groups. Secessionist religious movements attract members who have experienced dissatisfaction with dominant religious discourse. Commonly, secessionists groups reject elements of contemporary trends in exchange for the more nostalgic social structures.

Unlike the fluid social expectations of male and female as a by-product of post-modernism, gender roles in secessionist religious movements tend to have a concrete nature. Women's social position would likely conform to the confines of productive and industrial labor with low prestige or domestic chores such as *Kuche*, *Kinder*, and *Kleider* (cooking, children, and clothes). Ironically, the patriarchal privileged center habit of longing for distinction in the

[8] Genesis 1:28.

Church manifests itself in practices of what Veblen termed "vicarious conspicuous waste" such as the public display of wives and daughters expensive attire and non-useful accessories as a means of status enhancement. Some independent churches unintentionally evolve into a near-total institution such that it demands excessive loyalty, while its members become increasingly remote from the outside world including family members.

When churches acquire tendencies that resemble withdrawal from society such as the secessionist model, they become contra-evangelistic to male skeptics and women. Mainline churches collectively have an adult male shortage despite having a male majority in positions of power. Veblen partially explains such trends through his prediction that social institutions would inevitable resemble corporations rather than their original purpose or function. As a result members and participants become increasingly transformed into commodities, such that individuals become used for the sake of building the institution.

Since women consist of the majority of the "church" labor force, church becomes less attractive to men because unless they have a significant stake in the solution, then they become de-masculinized by default. Robert Franklin further illustrates how such dynamics become increasingly acute with younger African American males, including other "sub-middle class" racial-ethnic minority men regarding their exodus from the church. "The social-ethical teachings of Christianity encourage meekness ad passivity, which are dysfunctional and dangerous qualities in street-corner culture; the character traits of the ideal Christian run counter to the macho persona." [9]Ironically, the Nation of Islam as a sectarian group who incorporates a secessionist eschatological paradigm has been history successful in terms of recruiting African American men whose origins were in the Christian church. Part of their success extends far beyond doctrine, but their deliberate approach to reaffirming the masculinity of their male membership. Non-secessionist models permit outlets for men to reaffirm their masculinity through other institutions and means of participation in civil society.

Repatriatism Eschatology and Contra-Evangelism

The "repatriatism" eschatological perspective embraces the ideal that the attainment of liberation and salvation begins in this world and initiated with a faithful return to an original homeland or the land of the individual's ancestral origin as an essential part of adhering to the "original instructions." Lack of mindfulness to the "contra-evangelistic" element becomes increasingly evident when dominant groups assume that minority groups in diaspora have the same stake in the various systems centered around their place of residence. The mission field includes large sectors of the population who carry an acute sense of alienation based on their experience and therefore long for a physical return to a land of origin. Such withdrawal tendencies exist as a significant part of the mindsets of large sectors of society

[9] Franklin, Robert M. *Another Day's Journey: Black Churches Confronting the American Crisis* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1997) 90.

hold such core beliefs that mesh with their faith and theology, with the main deterrence stemming from social, economic, and political barriers.

Egalitarian-Assimilation and Contra-Evangelism

The "egalitarian-assimilation" eschatological perspective entails the belief that part of the salvation and liberation process means resolving some of the inequities while in this world as part of God's will for peace and social justice. Such adherents fully accept the essential doctrines of Christianity, yet oppose praxis which they perceive lacks sufficient attention to oppressive elements within its hermeneutics and theological praxis. Process and various forms of "liberation theology"[10] including feminist and womanist theology address aspects of the given concerns. "Contra-evangelism" surfaces when Gospel sharing becomes a product of even a slight oppressive relationship, ignores power dynamics, or mixes spiritual "Good News" with the bad news of "nothing can be done about present conditions of injustice and inequality in this world." The greater problem lies in the "contra-evangelistic" practice of self-deception by revising the present reality with claims of justice and fairness such that God and the church approve of the present order.

Nihilistic Eschatology and Contra-Evangelism

There lays an element of Western Christian culture that acknowledges that faith in the present and hope for the future rest of loose pillars. Realistically, a significant sector of the Christian faith has come to terms with its fragility, such that it has become one crisis, disaster, scandal, or polity amendment away from a near rejection of not only religious authority but authority altogether. Collectively religious institutions fail to recognize that a leading evangelistic challenge lays in the increased difficulty in both the churched and un-churched ability and willingness to perceive religious authority as legitimate.

Science and the increased acceptance of empiricism do indeed unlock many of life's mysteries, yet there lays an additional frontier that the best of the scientific world cannot reach; science and empiricism cannot determine the meaning of life. Religion functions as the sole institution that provides an answer for such a profound question that occupies the hearts of human creatures in great quantity.

A contributing factor to perhaps the growing trend of nihilism within the church and its mission field draws from the Western Church's increasing tendency to adopt a polity of increased "scientific management" like other social institutions such as the economy and universities. "Principles of efficiency, maximum output, and opaque patterns of cause and effect are supported by man's workmanship and idle curiosity but have been converted by financiers bent on getting something for nothing."[11] Such principles in themselves produce "contra-evangelism" due to its indifference to person's physical and spiritual needs.

[10] Term originally coined by Gustavo Gutierrez presently embraces a variety of appropriations

[11] Hodder, H.J. (1956) "The Political Ideas of Thorstein Veblen", *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science.* Wiley-Blackwell. vol. 22(3) 356.

The institutional expression of sense of purpose does not merely rest with the creeds it professes, but rather with the actions in which it displays. The ecclesiastic climate of "conspicuous consumption" and "conspicuous waste" promotes the latent consequence of cultivating and reproducing an antisocial and "contra-evangelistic" predatory class within the church. Veblen does acknowledge that the human creature has a combination of benevolent or pro-social and anti-social traits. The traits typically become put into practice not by reason but rather through instinct. Among the anti-social traits include: "the self-regarding instinct, or selfishness; and the predatory bent." [12]

Resolution

Theologian William Abraham suggest that church evangelism theorists and practitioners can resolve their modernity challenge by refraining from "taking modernity too seriously."[13] Although the growth and expansion of empiricism has introduced new concepts to theological understanding, theology itself requires faith. Faith itself entails an element of mystery. Abraham also raises the implication that evangelism itself becomes problematic as it becomes increasingly driven by the belief in methodological conversions in a mechanized way. His critique of such common approaches towards evangelism lays in its embracement of anthropocentrism and individualism rather than God-centered.

Lessons from indigenous groups provide some resolving insight in the case of reconciling the modernity's construction of the "leisure class" and the Western church's evangelistic challenges. Primitive groups displayed a great reliance on a power beyond self, a respect and acceptance of the mysteries of the Divine which requires faith beyond sensory perception, and a value for "original instructions."

Curtailing "contra-evangelism" requires attentiveness to individual and communal habits. Such habits manifest itself in a variety of conspicuous behaviors. Eschatological outlooks affect the church's perspectives and how the church is perceived. Yet for evangelism practitioners and theorist to adequately exercise their vocation, calling or gift, "contra-evangelistic" factors require institutions to cultivate evangelistic habits that place Jesus of Nazareth's Commission, life, and purpose at the center, and utility at the margins.

Biographical Note

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[12] Hodder, H.J. (1956) "The Political Ideas of Thorstein Veblen", *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science.* Wiley-Blackwell. vol. 22(3) 348.
[13] Abraham, William J. *The Logic of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989) 207.

Recent scholarship includes authoring the chapter "The Message From the Wilderness" in the forthcoming *Urban God-Talk* edited by Andre E. Johnson, co-authoring a chapter entitled "Religious Rights" in *Corrections*, and "Religious Convictions" in *Crime and Criminal Behavior* both by edited by William Chambliss.

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Existential Anthropology and Similarities between Religion, Sports and War

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Introduction

The recent discussion comparing cognitive function between humans and apes, while highlighting significant differences, seems to provide few answers why humans are cognitively and socially unique. But the disparity between humans and apes can only result from the physical attributes either species has or lacks in relation to the physical circumstance it occupies. Because of a lack of physical attributes to assist survival, humans must construct clothing, shelters, tools, and weapons, all complex cognitive functions requiring social cooperation. For example, because humans lack fur, the necessary construction of clothing becomes a creative answer to a physical problem. Because the problem is ongoing, the complex procedure for construction has to be repeated, remembered, and for the species to survive, passed on. The handing down of knowledge also requires recollection, and with it, cooperation on the part of teacher and student. Because most skills are more efficiently performed through communal cooperation (hunting, the building of shelters, etc.), social organization and sense of community is further engendered. Thus the human existential situation, characterized by physical vulnerability, engenders or requires, at once, greater cognitive function and social organization.

Therefore, in terms of human evolution, the basic process for the human condition begins with the state of survival the primates achieved followed by hominids who developed gradual physical characteristics of vulnerability (declension of teeth, fur, upper skeletal structure, etc.), which exceeded their cognitive capacity to cope, who were then succeeded by ancestral humans—*homo sapiens-vulnerabilis*--who achieved a state of intelligence, community and technology, which kept pace with, was a result of, and who overcame the continuing physical characteristics of vulnerability inherited from the hominids.[1] As to advanced cognitive function, because of the basic dependent vulnerable condition in which humans found themselves, the psychological state of things would also have been one of uncertainty and unknowing. Therefore, assumptions at knowing had to be made and had to develop through the process of associative reasoning.

[1] Though some discussion maintains the lower body development of the pelvic, leg and feet areas gave early humans advantage to run down prey over long distances, its practical application as an advantage is dubious. Small or large prey maneuverability allows them to escape quickly into cover, therefore chasing down prey would rarely be an option. If luck allowed it, the physical hazards posed by uncertain terrain resulting in personal injury and the energy consumed in bringing the animal down, cutting it into manageable pieces if it were large, and bringing it back from a distance would not be sensible as a regular endeavor. Just as aboriginal people are comparatively slow and unable to chase down prey, early humans used the spear or bow to strike from a distance and protect against faster, stronger, lethal predators. Tracking, stalking, and entrapping animals also were implemented as an example of intelligent, interdependent, cooperative effort requiring planning and communication, thus laying the foundation for social organization--along with all efforts at survival, which always involves the vicarious use of material things.

The Association of Ideas and the Importance of Knowing and Not-knowing

The mind, conditioned by the existential situation, is trained to draw causal connections and associations on a daily, hourly and by minute basis. It is the same mental probing and associative assumptions that lead to scientific, as well as superstitious presumptions and conclusions. Where does this association of ideas come from? A simple example as to how the existential situation caused the greater cognitive functions of association and reason comes with the use of fire. With the vulnerability of humans to cold, the warmth of fire no doubt would have been attractive. After a natural occurrence of fire, possibly from a lightening strike, the warmth of it was felt, remembered and desired. But borrowing fire and keeping it going would have been difficult in times of rain, wind, flooding, etc. Therefore, knowing how to make fire would have been the best plan, but it was the extreme need for it that coaxed the cognitive association and deduction to do it. The creation of the wood drill is an example. Since fire causes heat, those things experienced as hot, such as rubbing two sticks together, might cause fire. This recognizes a causal association between two separate events, that fire causes heat and therefore heat must cause fire. The flint method of starting fire probably came from noticing sparks from a kicked rock, which looks exactly like sparks from a fire. In this instance the logical association and the reverse deduction is that if a fire causes sparks, then sparks from a rock, which looks like sparks from a fire, might cause fire. Therefore, directing sparks onto tender by rubbing together two rocks to create fire became an accurate deduction. Thus we see the greater cognitive function of fire making resulting from a devolved situation of physical vulnerability. Thus for humans the things that have evolved are greater cognitive thinking, advanced tool making, social organization and religious assumption, all of which comes as the human psyche interfaces with the elements. Thus the process of associative reasoning comes from the existential situation where memory assists causal connection between events.

The reason why associations concerning religious notion and superstition are natural and persistent even in modern times has to do with the need to know in the face of what cannot be known.[2] For example, tragedies and disasters are certainly unknowns, therefore, appeals to gods, angels and ancestors for help are understandable.

That many beliefs and practices in primary cultures have remarkably common assumptions and characteristics over a wide range of region and culture indicates a universal dynamic of physical condition and behavior in reaction to environment. The beliefs concerning blood--that it has extreme phenomenal effects, that it can heal, purify and magically give life or cause harm, that it has social binding and stratifying properties--reveal common associative reasoning from the existential situation which produces the need to know in the face of what is not known.

While today we sit in capital comfort, with psychological assurances coming from science, which soothes our own need to know, peoples in the past having the same needs, without the aid of abundant physical knowledge, also had to know. Given the extreme conditions of survival, the extreme condition of physical vulnerability with heightened levels of awareness and memory, combined with the need to make an assumption about knowing in the blank face of what was not known, helps the researcher to not marvel at the assumptions primary peoples made about themselves and their environment. In fact, the

[2] Though superstitious notions and religious ideas have common basis and one is a facet of the other, the difference between religion and superstition is religious notions, such as the idea of spirit, the power of blood and the concept of life after death are more grounded in rational consideration, whereas superstitions deal with more immediate associations, i.e., countering the effect of a shade's dark magic, the control of weather, affecting the outcome in sports, war, etc.

ingeniousness and complexity of the mind of humans as they create and invent social reality can be seen and appreciated at the very start of social development. But it was the factor of not-knowing combined with development of associative reasoning, which drove assumptions and beliefs about self and environment and that found expression in practice and behavior. But even in the modern world when it comes to history, economics, the social or physical sciences, even experiences in everyday life--because of the need to know in the face of what is not known--associations are often made that are tenuously connected.[3] Thus, even in modern day life with the aid of science, because of the need to know coupled with the desire to direct physical, social or mental circumstance, it is a natural occurrence of the human condition to draw conclusions and make associations that are at times inconclusive. This is why tenuous associations and assumptions are made about the physical world, why superstition is prevalent, why everyday life involves associations more or less tenuous and why the assumptions primary people made about causes, in the face of what is not known, were, though at times wrong, quite rational. In other words, the existential situation provides the experience of acute physical vulnerability combined with mental uncertainty. Therefore, the need to know, which involves an assumption of knowing in the face of what is not known, leads humans to necessarily associate events and make assumptions about cause concerning the control of circumstances in everyday life, even to conjure cause beyond what is apparent, to create a social world of meaning that soothes the fear and worry about life.

The Existential Mirror of Relative Certainty

The ritual performance to superstitious behavior comes from everyday strategic actions involving vicarious-use, such as threading a needle or using utensils to carve or retrieve meat or vegetables. Everyday actions often involve probing or pushing (as I am typing I am pushing buttons) or moving an object from one designated place which serves a specific purpose to another position, which changes the purpose of the object placed or moved. When we drive our cars and move the shifter, the effects and purpose changes from reverse to drive or from drive to reverse. Many actions involve moving an object through an opening. The functional use of screws, nails, rivets, bolts and nuts, even placing a pen in a pen holder or a paper clip in a clip holder or putting a book back in the book case or taking it out involves moving objects through openings. The action involved in sports also mirror

[3] When it comes to observations concerning the stock market, causal associations are at times hit and miss. “The stock market fell today on rumors or war.” “It rose today following Company X’s beating of expected earnings.” “It fell today on the announcement of lower then expected job numbers.” But did the stock market rise or fall for those reasons? Sometimes it rises in the face of bad economic and political news. Sometimes it rises or falls as a result of cyclical buying, selling and taking of profits. The point is associations made concerning economic conditions and causality are sometimes at best tenuous. In the physical sciences, while the association of measurable data and the close proximity of one event to another more often allow safe assumption as to the cause of one event to another, sometimes associations between events are tenuously assumed. Thus, while in the sciences it is not unusual for associations thought to be cogent to later become inconclusive, tenuous ones in the navigation of everyday life are even more prevalent. For example, once when I was driving a car at night a vehicle approached from a distance with headlamps on high. As it got closer the lights remained high. Then I put my lights on high to let the driver know he or she should dim theirs. But the car got even closer with no lights dimmed. Finally, I put my lights back on high. Still no lights dimmed. In reaction I left mine on high. Then both lamps from the oncoming car went dark for a moment . . . then back to high. Obviously, they were letting me know both lamps were not working on dim. This is an awkward example of drawing conclusions in association to past events; when similar events occur, similar results are expected.

similar behavior: the importance of placing meaning to the successful movement of an object past a point or through an opening against resistance results in success and elation.[4]

Superstitious impulses mirror successful survival strategies and actions in the mind's subconscious effort to increase control against the uncertainties of life. When it comes to everyday life, we obtain a certain amount of certainty when it comes to survival because the strategies humans have created to survive, through trial and error, work.

The building of shelters (which vary in style according to differences in weather, subsistence or cultural fashion, from the tipis and yurts of the nomadic Comanche and Mongols, to the long bark houses of the more sedentary northeastern Iroquois and Powhatans, to the chalet type structures of northern Europeans or the snow or shod houses of the Eskimos) provide, through the construction process and protective results, a level of psychological comfort and certainty enjoyed in everyday life.

The production and use of tools also provides a level of predictability and certainty. When a spear or a bow or a flint implement or farming tool is fashioned or gun assembled, according to specific recipe, the manufacturing process itself is predictable and certain. The use of such implements for the purpose of survival, and other products for the purpose of transportation and commerce, all, when produced and used, provide an intended level of comfort, control and dependability. When it comes to the origin and production of superstitious procedure, it is these event-associations that are subconsciously hearkened to when other aspects of uncertainty in life present themselves.

That ritual procedure follows a strict order of events and any diversion from the prescribed procedure creates an expectation of failure for the intended results is testament that superstitious ritual is a mirror of the experiential template. In primary societies this was important. But Beard, North and Price relate how the Romans also followed a strict order of prescription to ritual and the importance of following the recipe exactly,

> Roman religion placed a great deal of emphasis on the most meticulous repetition of the correct formulae; supposedly, the slightest error in performance, even a single wrong word, led to the repetition of the whole ritual.[5]

The making of any weapon or implement demands specific order of procedure to achieve practical successful results. The fletching on an arrow, if misaligned, will cause it to veer from the intended mark; a net constructed without consistent repeatable procedure will at some point fail; a pot constructed without the proper medium, construction or tempering will fail in carrying the intended load. Therefore, it is practical for humans to mimic real life experiences in the construction of superstitious ritual requiring specific repeatable procedures following specifically prescribed recipes for obtaining success, in the attempt at magical control over things beyond control. In other words, the important existential

[4] In sports there is the reenactment of victory over the uncertainty of existence. When the requirements of survival are satisfied and leisure time is obtained, the sport, with its elements of competition and cooperation, focuses on victory over an opponent which represents the abhorrent struggles of existence. The worry and fear involved in actual survival is temporarily replaced with the concentration of hoped for victory, which, if attained, becomes elation and celebration. A good play and the final prospect of winning, when it happens, is a release from the reality of existence, which has been repressed. The purpose of the collective yell by the spectators is shared confirmation that the adversity of death and anonymity is overcome with the defeat of an enemy invented through sport.

[5] Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome: Vol. 1, A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 32.

template to which the subconscious mind hearkens is the procedural string of events that are relatively certain. Building shelters requires specific procedures providing relatively certain results. The making of clothing, as well as its wearing, requires specific process that if followed produces predictable outcomes. At one extreme Eskimos have to make and wear their clothing with specific procedure, the deviation from which can produce tragic results, the following, a degree of reliability. Even everyday dress in temperate climate requires specific procedure. Socks cannot go on over shoes, pants cannot be put on ahead of underwear, and shoes cannot, without difficulty, be put on before pants. In other instances of dress, the dictates of job, weather, sport, hunting, fishing or fashion also requires specific procedures to obtain relatively certain results.

Thus, as humans we necessarily create, as a means of survival, a world of certainty through the formulated and procedural vicarious-use of material things. Yet every day is filled with instances serendipitous. And it is this serendipity that is the cause and make-up of things superstitious. This is why, when the prospect of uncertainty presents itself, there is an immediate impulse to control future outcome, making it favorable and certain, with the physical manipulation of things. This is why baseball fans, when things are not going their way, turn their hats a different direction and why Ken Dryden, an accomplished goalie in the sport of hockey, in pre-game warm-ups, with specific procedure, had to always fire the first puck wide and to the right, hitting the boards. If he hit the glass or failed to raise the puck, he would play poorly. If he hit the boards themselves, he would play well.[6] That Dryden thought he would play poorly when his ritual went awry, when the puck hit the glass instead of the boards, is again the subconscious mind hearkening to the existential mirror of relative certainty because things will go wrong in everyday physical life if specific procedures are not specifically followed.

The reason humans think personal physical motions (the use of fingers, hands, arms, legs) affects circumstances which are not in close proximity to the event of the physical motions performed is because physical motions that are in close proximity to an event performed, do have effect. As Stuart A. Vyse suggests,

> We learn to be superstitious . . . because our superstitions appear to work. Something good or bad happens coincident with our having done something specific. As a result we are more likely to engage in similar behavior in the future, or, if the outcome was negative, to avoid it. This method of acquiring superstitious behavior depends on events coming together in time, something psychologists call *contiguity*. . . . As *Homo sapiens* we are sensitive to a myriad of very complicated patterns, but perhaps the most basic and pervasive pattern of all is produced by two objects aligned in space or two events paired in time.[7]

When a primary person throws a spear or shoots an arrow or a modern person picks up a phone and presses buttons to make a phone call, these are events in close proximity with direct effect because of the physical motion performed. There is thus a harkening to the existential mirror of relative certainty to affect negative circumstances. Therefore, the subconscious mind assumes because physical motion of arm and hand affects the throwing of a spear or the motion of hand and fingers make happen a phone call, physical motion

[6] Andrew Podnieks, *Hockey Superstitions: From Playoff Beards to Crossed Sticks and Lucky Shots* (Plattsburg, NY: McClelland and Stewart, 2010), 84-85.

[7] Stuart A. Vyse*, Believing in Magic: The Psychology of Superstition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 60.

through physical ritual will affect things beyond control such as a drought, a flood, a shaman's spell or a negative outcome in sports or war.

That uncertainty affects the reason and form for superstitious ritual is evidenced in the fact the more uncertain the outcome or dangerous the experience the more complex and structured the ritual becomes. As Sullivan aptly observes, in the world of sports,

> A superstition is a crutch, a prop. It helps to get one through a difficult situation. It helps to relieve anxiety. This is particularly true in sports. Take baseball, for instance. Because pitched or batted balls travel uncertain paths, a player is never sure what's going to happen in a game. A pebble in the infield or a bad call by an umpire can affect the outcome of a crucial game. There is also the fear factor, the anxiety a batter experiences at the idea of facing a 95-mile per hour fastball . . . Some athletes believe that tapping home plate three times or taping a lucky penny in a shoe is also helpful.[8]

And as Vyse mentions,

> Uncertainity is an integral part of most sports. In basketball, the best professional players make only half their shots from the field. Quarterbacks in the National Football League complete, on average, only 58 percent of their passes. Because the motivation to win or perform well is quite strong, it is not surprising that athletes resort to magic in an attempt to alter percentages. Interestingly, superstitions within a particular sport is generally restricted to the least-certain activities.[9]

From his own experience as a player with the Detroit Tigers and from 28 interviews with other professional baseball players and sportswriters, George Gmelch found the two activities in baseball involving the most chance also involved more ritual behavior. With an average success rate of 97.5%, the fielder knows at least 9.7 times out of 10 he will execute his task without flaw. On the other hand, the batter will feel accomplished if he hits 25% (.250) of pitches. The players who exceed 30% (.300) are considered heroes. But leading a life filled with even greater uncertainty is the pitcher.[10]

> His best pitch may be hit for a home run, and his worst pitch may be hit directly into the hands of a fielder for an out or be swung at and missed for a third strike. He may limit the opposing team to a few hits, yet lose the game, or he may give up a dozen hits and win. Frequently pitchers perform well and lose, and perform poorly and win.[11]

Thus, for baseball players, it is on the hitting and pitching where most ritual behavior is focused.

Similarly, Malinowski, who studied the Trobriand Islanders off the coast of eastern New Guinea, found those who fished the lagoon relied on their skills, but the ones fishing the

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[8] George Sullivan, *Don't Step on the Foul Line: Sports Superstitions* (Brookfield, CT: Millbrook Press, 2000), 4.
[9] Vyse, *Believing,* 27.
[10] George Gmelch, "Ritual and Magic in American Baseball" in *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology,* 8th ed., by James P. Spradley and David W. McCurdy, ed. Alan McClare (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 354.
[11] Ibid., 353.

more dangerous open ocean relied more on the superstitious practices they thought would help them.[12]

Considering the poignant uncertainties of war, Michael Phillips, staff reporter of the Wall Street Journal shares the sentiments of soldiers waiting to enter the theatre of war in Iraq,

> Wartime brings out the superstitious side of the troops, whose very survival is often at the whim of forces well beyond their control. And as they wait in the desert for G-Day--ground-attack day--the Marines of the 3rd Battalion, 7th Regiment, have a lot of time to ponder the uncertainties ahead. "Everybody's got their superstitions," says First Sgt. Vic Martin, 40 years old, from Hemet, Calif. "The more dangerous the job, the more superstitious."[13]

One of the most dangerous jobs in the Army is that of snipers who have elaborate superstitions to protect them. Their camouflage suits, weapons and bullets become sacred objects. No one is to wear their suits or look through their scopes. Every sniper wears an amulet, a smooth 7.62 mm slug, around their neck. Their reason? As Sgt Zach Hansen, a 21-year-old sniper from Salt Lake City says, "This is the bullet that's going to take you out. As long as it's around your neck, you'll be kept safe."[14]

Another soldier with much on his mind about future unknowns was the commander of Union forces in the Civil War, Ulysses S. Grant. Known for aggressively pushing ahead, he also took no chances with his superstitions and structured them in specific ways. Early in his career, on leave from Jefferson Barracks to see his future wife, he came on a wet weather creek. This time the banks were full and the current was swift. After a moment of hesitation considering what to do, Grant relates this notion before plunging in on his horse,

> One of my superstitions had always been when I started to go any where, or to do anything, not to turn back, or stop until the thing intended was accomplished. I have frequently started to go places where I had never been and to which I did not know the way . . . and if I got past the place without knowing it, instead of turning back, I would go on until a road was found turning in the right direction, take that, and come in by the other side.[15]

The reason for repetition to superstitious ritual is procedures in everyday tasks require specific sequential processes that are repeated to procure predictable successful results. The making of fire, the driving of a car, the manufacturing of rockets, jets, airplanes and automobiles or any product, all require specific repeatable procedures. It is therefore natural the facet of constant repetition in everyday tasks would also be incorporated in the ritual process. This is evident in the pre-game ritual developed by Craig Ramsey who had a long career with the Buffalo Sabres of the National Hockey League. As he relates,

> I'd always go off the ice exactly two minutes before the warm-up ended and just before I'd go, I'd take one shot from the red line and a second shot from the blue line. Rick Seiling (a teammate) was aware of what I always did. So he'd get the puck and pass it to me so I could take those two shots. When it was

[12] Ibid., 352.
[13] "The Patriot Files," last modified March 3, 2003, www.patriotfiles.com/forum/showthread.php?t=25534
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ulysses S. Grant, *Memoirs and Selected Letters,* vol. 1, chapter 3 (Grant, 1885; this compilation, notes and chronology by Literary Classics of the United States: New York, 1990), 38-39.

> time to go back out onto the ice, I'd always make it a point to be the next-to-last player to leave the dressing room. Jerry Korab was the player who went out of the dressing room last. He'd let me go ahead of him. When I was back out on the ice and skating around, I'd make an effort not to cross any of the line. I always touched the goalie with my stick, too. But I did it in a certain way. I'd tap the ice twice, then tap the goalie twice.[16]

Here we see psychological reassurance in the face of uncertainty through ritual action which harkens to the predictable in everyday tasks. Steve Preece, a defensive back for the Los Angeles Rams, performed pre-game rituals that had a sequence which had to be slavishly followed every time. His day would begin with same meal every time. He would always leave for the stadium at exactly 11:20 A.M. Before the game, Preece would eat a candy bar every hour on the hour. When he dressed for the game, every item of clothing had to go on from left to right. When his team took to the field for warm-up exercises, Preece would go to a corner of the stadium and perform 10 push-ups. When the national anthem played, he always made sure he was standing on the 49-yard line.[17] Of course, such ritual is an example of the mind previewing, on a constant basis, contiguous associations even when the effects are coincidental. Vyse explains,

> There are many psychological paths to superstition, but one of the most important of these is through direct experience with the world. We learn to be superstitious because . . . our superstitions appear to work. Something good or bad happens coincident with our having done something specific. As a result we are more likely to engage in similar behavior in the future, or, if the outcome was negative, to avoid it. This method of acquiring superstitious behavior depends on events coming together in time, something psychologists call *contiguity . . .* both spatial and temporal contiguity have profound effects on human perception and learning. Much of our behavior is response to patterns in our environment. As *Homo sapiens* we are sensitive to a myriad of very complicated patterns, but perhaps the most basic and pervasive pattern of all is produced by two objects aligned in space or two events paired in time.[18]

The reason superstitious associations are made which seem to have little correlative value, again has to do with uncertainty, contiguity and coincidence. Before an assignment or activity is begun and the outcome is uncertain, the mind immediately, as though grabbing at straws, looks to correlate physical action to desired results because physical action in everyday life is directly related to physical results. We see this kind of subconscious mimicry in a baseball player's obsession with stepping over the foul line on trips to and from the dugout. Mel Stottlemyre, a star pitcher for the New York Yankees, shares this experience,

> We were playing the Twins, and I was headed for the bullpen to warm up before the start of the game. I made it a point not to step on the foul line, and JimHegan, a Yankee coach, said that I shouldn't be superstitious, that I shouldn't be afraid to step on the line. So I did. The first batter I faced was Ted Uhlaender, and he hit a line drive off my left shin. It went for a hit. Then Rod Carew, Tony Oliva, and Harmon Killebrew followed with base hits. The fifth man hit a single.

[16] Sullivan, *Don't Step*, 45-46.
[17] Ibid., 36-38.
[18] Vyse, *Believing*, 60.

I was charged with five runs. I never stepped on the foul line again.[19]

But a handful of players do the opposite. Catcher Darrell Porter, who played for the St. Louis Cardinals and Texas Rangers, always made it a point to step over the line. Then one day he accidentally stepped on the line and nothing bad happened to him. This led to a different routine. On the opening day of each season, when the players were being introduced to the fans, Porter made it a point to step on the line with both feet.[20]

Another example of imposing value because of contiguous coincidence comes from Christine Weller, who in 1999 began her twenty-fifth season as head coach of women's basketball at the University of Maryland. In the 1984-1985 season, when the Terrapins finished with a losing record, coach Weller noticed no player was wearing the number 12. So she restored the number to the lineup and the Terps resumed their winning ways. Weller assumed one had to do with the other.[21]

Again, when events are contiguous, but have no correlative value, we impose value because we correlate success to events which are contiguous and do correlate. Concerning the game of poker, as a point of comparison, when a player drives to a game, every second--from walking to the car, to getting in, to driving, to getting out, to walking to the game--is filled with successful correlative contiguous events. The body and car react responsively to requests, and chances are good for a safe arrival. What is not certain, in the mind of the player, is how he or she will do when it comes to the game. There is a multiplicity of unknowns when playing. Best guess estimations are made in relation to other player's betting patterns, body and facial language, what they may hold, what is held and related probabilities in relation to the remaining number of cards in the deck. All this makes any move uncertain, which raises anxiety through the course of play. Because of this uncertainty, in my own experience I have found myself thinking to do silly physical things before a game to increase "luck." Some of them include taking a detour when walking to the area of play, removing a lighter from a pocket and throwing it away, smoking a cigar right before play. In one particular evening during a long drought of quality hands, with the same thought in mind, trying to affect the course of events, I found myself moving to different seats or when getting up to use the restroom, instead of going to the closest one, walking to one much further away. This again is a subconscious hearkening to the existential mirror of relative certainty, where life's actions do change the course of events.

An example of finding correlative value to contiguous events that have little value, but were coincidental, again comes from personal experience with the game of poker. In one of my first games, in one of the first deals, I received hold cards of king and four. Coincidentally, the next three cards on the table produced a king and four, making a pair, with which I won. Later in the game I was again dealt hold cards of king and four. Then again, a king came, then a four. This again helped my cause with two pairs. A few days later in another game, I was dealt two kings for hold cards, a good hand in itself. Then a king and two fours came, giving me a "full house," an extremely difficult hand to beat. Of course, because of this coincidence I became enamored with the contiguity of kings and fours and continued for a while in subsequent games to play them, but to no avail because in reality a king and four has limited value. Even today I am tempted to play the hand because of the memory of contiguity and coincidence.

In a more serious setting, that of war, similar psychological patterns are played out when poignant elements of uncertainty also create a desire to control destiny by associating or creating coincidental contiguous events perceived to assist favorable outcome. Just as

[19] Sullivan, *Don't Step*, 11.
[20] Ibid., 11-12.
[21] Ibid., 21.

psychological activity toward superstitious activity is at a height before game time for athletes, the religious sentiments of soldiers also comes to the fore before battle. Generally, for British soldiers during the First and Second World Wars, use of mascots, belief in luck and the consultation of fortune-tellers were on the increase.[22]

> Although divination is a perennial aspect of popular culture, during the years of the First World War, a prevailing atmosphere of uncertainty and insecurity conspired to push fortune telling to the fore. In 1917, an Anglican chaplain wrote scathingly of, 'the reputation enjoyed in London and elsewhere by persons who profess to foretell the future, with especial reference to the course of the war, by "occult" methods of various kinds'. Although clearly present in the First World War, this interest may have grown with the burgeoning of the inter-war leisure industry and it was possibly much greater in 1939 than it had been in 1914. Certainly, for many anxious soldiers fortune-tellers were an obvious resort and Colin Starkie, who commanded a field hygiene section in North Africa and Italy, remembered that many of his men visited fortune-tellers while stationed in North Africa. Ironically, by the years of the Second World War, even chaplains could seek reassurance from clairvoyants.[23]

Because of the urgent uncertainty of war, requests for communion and baptism and the practice of prayer--even by those normally agnostic--would understandably be at heightened levels during times of battle.[24]

Specifically, the uses of amulets of all sorts were widespread. The Bible itself was used as a talisman—its effectiveness confirmed by stories of it stopping bullets and shrapnel. Rosaries, medals and other Catholic artifacts were not only used for protection by Catholics, but non-Catholic soldiers as well.[25] Secular objects were also in widespread use: lucky coins, trinkets, sheep's cauls, even pieces of coal and shrapnel were seized upon in the belief that like repels like, [26] which is reminiscent of the widespread like = like magic formula used by primary people to control the elements, e.g., the use of air to control wind or water to bring rain, etc.

That the battlefield would be replete with events from which a mind filled with uncertainty could easily draw coincidental associations when results can be so final is apparent. It is not just a matter of winning or losing a game due to some understandable fluke. In battle a life either endures or it does not. The Bible stopped a bullet and saved a life. Men have dreams of going into battle and not coming back and they do not. They have dreams they will, and do. In one instance a British officer took some stained glass from a ruined church and was warned it would bring bad luck. Apparently it did, he was killed not long after.

We also see coincidental associations of contiguous events in the belief human mascots

were considered to provide protective shielding because of their having survived dangerous

situations.

Whether secular or religious in origin, personal mascots were not necessarily

[22] Michael Snape, *God and the British Soldier: Religion and the British Army in the First and Second World Wars* (New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2005), 31, 38.
[23] Ibid., 30.
[24] Ibid., 46-56.
[25] Ibid., 33-35.
[26] Ibid., 36.

> inanimate objects. In the First World War, Guy Chapman's experience of a colonial of the 13th Royal Fusiliers convinced him that this officer was preternaturally lucky. After a bombardment in which this officer had correctly anticipated the fall of the final shell he became to Chapman a human 'talisman which could soothe frayed nerves and call up new strength'. Likewise, Macpherson Knowles recalled the tendency among infantrymen in the Second World War to regard some officers as 'lucky', i.e. 'they could do anything and didn't seem to get hit'. Like Chapman's colonel, these soldiers were prized commodities because men in their platoons considered themselves 'covered' by their good luck.[27]

The Emanation and Contagion of Power in the Object

Careful handling and restricted viewing: the Stanley Cup, the ark, Australian Churinga, and sacred bundles. A common characteristic to superstitious behavior in war, sports and religion is the imbuement of particular objects with contagious power. This raises them to a particular level of importance requiring specific guidelines for handling, caring and viewing, the purpose of which is to maintain the exclusive importance of the object and reverence by the audience.

As concerns the Stanley Cup in the world of Hockey, since 1993 the National Hockey League started allowing players and staff of the season winning team to take the Cup home for several days. Activities would include a public parade of the cup in company of the players and the traveling of the cup to different towns, hospitals, golf courses and mountaintops all over the world. Observers were allowed to touch and be photographed with it, but the one anathema for any serious hockey player was not to touch it. If they did, it would never become theirs. So as not to jinx their own future chance, this superstition was painfully observed, when the Staal brothers, in helping their brother Eric celebrate his part in a season win, were careful to maintain distance between themselves and the Cup.[28]

In the time of Saul's reign, the ark of God was captured by the Philistines who brought it to the Ashodite house of Dagon. Overnight the statue of Dagon fell on its face. This was then followed by a plague of tumors. Understandably, the ark was then sent to Ekron, where many more were infected. In desperation, after consulting with their priests and diviners, the Philistines decided to send it back to Israel to the territory of Beth-shemesh with a guilt offering of 5 gold mice and 5 gold tumors. On receiving the ark some looked inside and 50,070 Israelites were also cut down (1 Samuel 4: 17-6:21). Like a hot potato it was then sent to Kiriath-jearim where it stayed for 20 years until David became King and wanted the ark in Jerusalem, but in transit Uzzah was struck down when he tried to steady the ark when the oxen pulling it stumbled. "And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God." Now David was afraid to bring the ark home with him and left it three months with Obed-edom who was blessed because of it (2 Samuel 6: 1-11; 1 Chronicles 13:5-14). David later determined the reason for the outbreaks was because it was not carried by the Levites as specifically prescribed by the Law of Moses (1 Chronicles 15:12-15). That holy objects, like the ark, could be dangerous is evidenced in the fact the sacrificial ceremonial objects and utensils used in Israel's tabernacle were covered with porpoise skin by Aaron and his sons, so the Kohathites, in charge of set up, would not touch them and die. They were also instructed not to look at them even for a moment (Numbers 4:1-20).

[27] Ibid., 37.
[28] Podnieks, *Hockey Superstitions*, 13-14.

The objects especially sacred to the aborigine Australians were *Churinga*: rounded, oval or elongated flattened stones or slabs and wood. Some were incised or painted with patterns of lines and dots which held meaning in relation to the tribe's totem plants or animals. They were always hidden, were only revealed on rare occasions and were never, without severe punishment, to be seen by women or uninitiated men. When brought out, they were examined then carefully rubbed with red ochre or charcoal.[29] In the initiation ceremony of the Arunta tribe, the initiate passes through the rites of circumcision and subincision and displays a general demeanor of self-restraint; he is then taken to the *Ertnatulunga* where the sacred *Churinga* are hid. There the *Churinga* are examined with much care and reverence while the old men explain to whom they now belong. While this is going on a low singing of chants referring to the *Alcheringa*, from whom the *Churinga* came, is kept up. In the end the initiate is given his *Churinga* name never to be uttered except among the men of his own group.[30] In the *Intichiuma* ceremony of the Witchetty Grub clan, one of the requirements was the participants could take no food or water for the duration of the ceremony, which involved two days of much walking, singing, climbing and lifting. At several points within the ceremony the *Alatunja,* the ceremonial leader, ritualistically strikes each individual in the stomach with a *Churinga* and says, "You have eaten much food."[31] What this saying exactly meant to the participants is unknown, but certainly the effect, if not the intent, was to assuage the concern and desire for food and water. That the *Alatunja* strikes with the *Churinga* is significant. The *Churinga* being sacred objects had emanating power of their own. This power came from *Alcheringa* beings, which when they ceased to exist would enter the ground and leave behind their spirit part which was retained in the *Churinga*.[32]

Like the Australians, village farmers of the Mississippian period in Missouri (A.D. 900-1700) also had sacred objects imbued with power that could only be viewed by a select few.

> Copper plaques still held extreme religious significance in the historic period and were revered by southeastern Indian tribes. The plaques seem to have been the most important of all contents of sacred bundles and could be viewed and handled only by irreproachable individuals. They were the holiest of objects . . . representing the welfare and well-being of the community. They were carefully wrapped in deerskin and enclosed in a sacred bundle consisting of a woven mat case or a woven bag. [33]

Similarly, Carocci relates about the plains Indians,

> Ritual objects, including bonnets and sacred bundles, as well as shields, had to be kept outside. This was because they were powerful items and could be touched and seen only by certain people within the society. They were stored in rawhide cases called *parfleche* and hung on tripods outside the tepee.[34]

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[29] Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (New York: Dover Publications, 1968), 128-132, 144-151.
[30] Ibid., 139-140.
[31] Ibid., 170-177.
[32] Ibid., 174-175, 188.
[33] Carl H. Chapman and Eleanor F. Chapman, *Indians and Archaeology of Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1983), 81.
[34] Max Carocci, *Ritual and Honor: Warriors of the North American Plains* (London: British Museum Press, 2011), 13.

Belief in the contagious and emanating power of a sacred object is maintained in the deferential handling and viewing of the object. As we have seen with the Stanley Cup, the touching of it, by those desiring it, is taboo.[35] The ark and sacred utensils of the Israelites were to be handled only by those authorized to do so and not to be touched at all, hence the use of porpoise skin for the utensils and rings and carrying poles for the ark (Exodus 37:1-5). The Australian Churinga was carefully handled only by select elders.

The connection between careful handling and sacredness has to do with the reverence of the object itself. A mother handles a child with care because she loves and adores it. Things not so important are handled with less care. The power in the object itself inspires careful handling and is confirmed in the mind of the handlers by the act of careful handling itself. It also makes sense that a thing having power would require careful handling, for if it were broken or harmed, the power emanating from it would be adversely affected. Therefore, careful handling is testament to the power in the sacred object. The aspect of not touching the object is additional evidence for power in the object.[36] In God's instruction to Moses and Aaron concerning the handling of the holy objects of the tabernacle by the Kohathites, that they should not touch them after being packed in porpoise skin by Aaron and his sons, a warning is given, "But do this to them that they may live and not die when they approach the most holy objects" (Numbers 4:19). The key word here is "approach." Like radioactivity, the closer one is to the source the more dangerous it is. That a thing must not be touched suggests the proximate power of a sacred object and the contagion emanating from it.

Like handling, the viewing of sacred objects fulfilled distinct purposes and were by degrees regulated. In one extreme a sacred object was hardly to be viewed at all. When the inside of the ark was illicitly viewed, some 50,000 Israelites died. The sacred utensils of the Jewish tabernacle were never to be viewed by the Kohathites. The sacred Churinga of the Australians were to be viewed only on special occasion and never by women or the uninitiated. The idea of strict regulation of viewing enhances the mystery and maintains the uniqueness of the object and in that way supports it as emanating a power. If an object that is supposed to be sacred is commonly looked upon like ordinary objects in everyday life, the uniqueness of the object is lost. The facet of serious consequences for viewing a sacred object also instills fear, which corresponds with the primal instinct to avert the eyes from a thing feared. Thus fear and reverence, mystery and uniqueness of sacred objects are at once accomplished through strict regulations about viewing.

Collective viewing and elevated place: Moses' staff, the bronze serpent, and religious relics. Conversely, for the same reasons, the purposes of other sacred objects were meant for collective viewing and general inspiration, evident in their accessible or elevated position. When Moses parted waters for the escape of Israel from Pharaoh, he was instructed to, "lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it . . ." (Exodus 14:16). Moses was not asked to speak a command or perform ritual, but to raise his staff, presumably for everyone to see. Hence, the Israelites could make clear connection to what Moses, as instrument of God, was doing for them. The raised staff would be the focal point of attention for the event and a focal point of reference for

[35] Other gaming objects and trophies are preserved with enshrinement in glass cases, which can be found in the halls of any high school, college or university, to be viewed for the purpose of instilling shared identity and common purpose.

[36] This brings to mind the sacred status rulers achieved in some societies where eye contact and physical proximity would be prohibited or strictly regulated.

remembering. When the Israelites were attacked in Canaan by poisonous snakes, Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a standard for all to see, with a promise that viewing it would heal them (Numbers 21:5-9). Doctors today advise patients when bitten to remain calm and keep activity to a minimum. When the Israelites were attacked en mass, anxiety or hysteria probably set in and people died. But with focused attention on an object promised to heal, the result could have been a calming one and the promise made would have thus been effectuated.

The idea of elevated place is a universal human practice with the intent to raise reverence and awe on the part of the viewers for the thing or person elevated. The Pope is elevated above crowds when addressing them. Speakers are elevated above their audience. The purpose of elevated place therefore is to bring the person or thing thus situated to the center of attention, which makes them unique from others because of their special and unique place. In this way elevated place assists the belief a person or thing is sacred.

Early Christian relics, based on the concept of beneficent contagion,[37] are often placed in accessible elevated locations or are put within containers constructed to draw attention. The focal point of the relic chapel in the Church of Maria Ausiliatrice in Turin is a lighted cross containing a purported piece of the true cross.[38] St. Mark's Basilica in Venice was built in 829 for the express purpose of enshrining the relics of St. Mark the Evangelist. They are now kept in the high alter at St. Mark's.[39] In 1206 when the residents of Amiens acquired a piece of John the Baptist's head, they resolved to erect France's largest church to house it.[40] While such edifices were like giant billboards funneling reverence and awe towards their sacred objects, the reliquaries that contained them were built bejeweled and ornate, suggesting to the viewer the importance of the object within. In the fourteenth century, King Charles V of France collected incredible relics that he kept in gem-studded reliquaries in his royal chapel.[41]

> Reliquaries appear in an impressive variety of forms, including boxes, caskets, shrines, and the like, and they are typically ornate, often made of silver or gold and commonly bejeweled. For example, a French casket of the twelfth or thirteenth century depicts a crucified Christ and other holy personages in Limoges enamel copper, studded with gems. Another reliquary contains the Holy Thorn set in a gemstone and surrounded by an enameled scene of the Last Judgement, with many figures in full relief and bearing the arms of John, Duke of Berry.[42]

While Muslim relics were expressly used to delimit territory and political sovereignty,[43] they also retain similar status to Christian ones in their connection to mythological origins,

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[37] Joe Nickell, *Relics of the Christ* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 13. Christian relics, like other sacred objects, are conceived as such because of their connection to past supernatural events. In this case the miraculous events in the life of Jesus. Relics come from the body of Jesus or something that touched him or from those positively associated with him. The idea of beneficent contagion is that the relic can heal or change events for those in proximity or who are viewing it and that the power of any relic, even if it is a miniscule droplet of blood, is incomparable, absolute and irreducible.

[38] Ibid., 17.

[39] Ibid., 37.

[40] Ibid., 19.

[41] Barbara Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1978), 237.

[42] Nickell, *Relics,* 20.

the attribute of the object to bestow blessings and the enshrinement of the object with complete edifices.

> Muslim scholarship also links selected objects, actions, and locations to the origins and development of Islamic civilization. One example . . . is the accounts of the discovery of the treasure of the Ka 'bah, consisting of golden gazelles from pre-Islamic Arab and Iranian kings, and swords and armor from the Israelite prophets. Muslim accounts draw extensively on a number of ancient and late antique motifs, such as the burial of the temple implements, the divine origins of swords, and the king as the guardian of the sanctuary. Analysis of how these motifs are appropriated into Muslim accounts shows that the objects contained in the treasure of the Ka 'bah are employed as part of larger narrative framework incorporating the prophet Muhammad and Islam into a history of prophets and kings going back to Adam following his expulsion from the garden of Eden. Specific descriptions associated with the golden gazelles, swords, and armor of the treasure portray these objects as symbols of the mythological origins of Islam within the context of the genesis of civilization on earth.[44]

In many instances the hairs of Muhammad were used to establish burial sites of martyrs and to found mosques and madrasas. Of the hairs of Muhammad in India, there is legend they moved, grew, and multiplied. In another account, leftover water from Muhammad's ablution and mouth rinsing was used to mark the place of a mosque.[45] A portion of 26 hairs, received by Umar b. Muhammad from his father al-Murshidi, an upright man who visited Muhammad for fifty years, caused Umar to be blessed for fifty-six years.[46]

Like the relics of Christianity and Islam, Buddhist ones are also associated with supernatural origin, contagious effect and focal placement. In the late Victorian period, Paul Carus an American publisher and popular supporter of Buddhism received, with reluctance, a relic from one of the leading Buddhist monks of that revival period, Seelakkhandha. In a letter to Carus, Seelakkhandha's defense of relic veneration begins when Buddha himself requested, on entering Nirvana in the park of Opawattana of the Mallawa kings, that his relics be distributed. The distribution begins with the division of the relics into equal portions among eight kings who enshrined them in their dominions. Asoka, who reigned at Patna over 2,200 years ago, then redistributed them into 84,000 *dagebas* or shrines.[47] Seelakkhandha goes on to say,

> The relic I am sending you is one thus obtained from the ruins of Dageba at Apura and has been kept with me with great veneration—offering flowers, incense, etc., morn and eve. I believe this to be a genuine relic of the Buddha. We reverence Buddha's relics as a mark of gratitude to Him who showed us the way of salvation and as a token of remembrance of the many personal virtues (bhagavat, arhat samyaksambuddha) which His life illustrated; and those of His disciples (i.e., Rahats) for similar reasons, and also to keep us reminded of

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[43] Brannon Wheeler*, Mecca and Eden: Ritual, Relics, and Territory in Islam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 17.
[44] Ibid., 11.
[45] Ibid., 73-74.
[46] Ibid., 74-75.
[47] Kevin Trainer, *Relics, Ritual, and Representation in Buddhism: Rematerializing the Sri Lankan Theravada Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 18-19.

> their noble exemplary lives as results of Lord Buddha's invaluable doctrine. We do not believe that by "worshipping" relics we attain Nirvana, obtain any remission of our sins, or gain even merely any worldly benefit . . . But having in close proximity to us any monument or relic to perpetuate the memory of one who has been a unique example of virtue and benevolence, does I venture to say, remove many obstacles in our way and make us inclined to follow that great Teacher.[48]

As Trainer points out a key word here is "proximity." Not only could relics perform miraculous deeds, disappearing if not accorded proper veneration, rising in the air, emitting multicolored lights, duplicating the "twin marvel" performed by Buddha himself with streams of fire and water emitted from opposing parts of the body, a relic could also, for those witnesses in proximity, cause a complex mental state of joy, serenity and confidence.[49]

The dynamic of exertion, emotional connection and legendary origins: the totem animal, the Roman standard and the home run ball. As counteraction to the existential situation--one of monotony, meaninglessness and uncertain existence--the human mind creates mental landscape with opposing powers. Some of these powers are at hand and can be tapped through the ritual use of objects directing events that are themselves opposed. Some powers are held by the objects themselves. In the prior instance associative reasoning is accessory to the creation of rituals, which becomes a way of directing events against the unknown. In the world of sports, we see a perfect example of this dynamic.

Human excitement has much to do with exertion against counter forces. In that sense excitement is an extreme form of relief that transforms itself into elation. The danger, and struggle involved in bringing down mammoth by early hunters or killing whale by early fishermen would be an instant source of glory and gratification memorialized through story and elaboration. Modern fishermen feel the same satisfaction in reeling in giant marlin or sailfish.

In the world of sports, the dynamic of exertion against counter force is instantly set in motion when two opposing teams or individuals are placed in competition. Excitement and involvement for the players and spectators is heightened with rewards, honors, medals, pageantry, differentiating and sometime elaborate costume and the keeping of records.

Records serve to maintain exhilaration because they are themselves an opposing force. Not only are competitors to be overcome, so are records. When a record is "broken," this is cause for celebration, glorification and immortalization for the record breaker. Objects involved in the event are made sacred when they are imbued with material and memorialized value. In a regular game of baseball, when a batter hits a home run, there is clamor for the ball and emotional connection is made between player and spectator. If the home run was hit by a significant player, the event will be memorialized through safe-keeping and autographed display of the ball. But when a national home-run record is broken, the ball itself commands sacred reverence through extravagant material value,[50] historical glorification in connection to legendary event. We find parallel characteristics to other sacred objects. The sacred Churinga of the Australians were left long ago by the Alcheringa; Christian relics find importance because they were connected to past legends; totemic figures represent past mystical origin of humans from animals. The sacredness of

[48] Ibid., 21-22.
[49] Ibid., 93, 130, 168-169, 171, 187.
[50] The record breaking home run ball hit by Barry Bonds sold for over $750,000.00.

an object, therefore, has to come from uncommon origin because an object emanating power is itself an uncommon happening. Therefore, the power in the object must be bestowed and must originate in supernatural or in the case of sports, unusual event.

Another object thought to be sacred by its people was the Roman standard. Suggesting totemic characteristic--animals on poles carried by bearers wearing skins[51]--they also were carefully handled. They were never to fall to the ground and if lost in battle were to be retrieved at all costs. Used to pitch and strike camp they were so revered they had a tent of their own next to the commanding officer and played key roles in religious festivals where they were anointed with precious oils and decorated with garlands.

With similar awe and purpose-inspiring characteristics like the Roman Standard, the most popular of which was the eagle, a North American plains Iowan war song also reflects the sentiment of purpose fulfillment through shared identity with the totem animal, coincidentally in this instance also an eagle,

> It's me--I am a war eagle! The wind is strong, but I am an eagle! I am not ashamed, no--I am not. The twisting eagle's quill is on my head. I see my enemy below me. I am an eagle, a war eagle![52]

According to Carocci, plains warriors sought protection from animals and supernatural beings such as the mythical Thunderbird. Many societies were named after a particular animal protector or animal part: the Kit Foxes, Doves, Mad Dogs, Bulls, Mosquitoes, and One Horn Society. Some societies kept sacred bundles consisting of animal skins, feathers, hooves and claws.[53] As Patrick Smith mentions,

> Totemism is a system of meaning which provides individual and social value by the multiplication of uniqueness through differentiation and cohesion. Not only do members have a sense of belonging because they are part of a clan, but because the clan has a totem identity wholly different from other clans (as uniquely different as a sparrow is from a bear) members identify more more closely with the clan to whom they belong. They are unique as the totem clan is unique because the clan to whom they belong is uniquely different from others.[54]

As part of the totemic system, totem objects, which were focally placed, served the purpose of collective viewing and purpose fulfillment. We see this same function in the world of sports with the adopted mascot, often in exaggerated costume, out in front of the audience performing gyrations and acts intended to whip up enthusiasm for the home team in their effort to defeat their opponents. Thus the purpose of viewing a sacred communal object, whether as standard for war, or in sports or as part of religious practice, was to

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[51] Stories of the earliest standards were of clumps of hay. But Pliny the Elder describes early functional ones, used by the Republican army, as figures depicting the boar, the Minotaur, the horse, the wolf and the eagle. After Marius (104 B.C.) the eagle became the main figure used. A hand, and in later times an image of the emperor were also used. Unique from other military personnel, the standard bearers wore animal skins of bears, wolves and lions with the head of the animal covering the helmet and the pelt covering the uniform. This combination of animal skins being worn by the bearers and the standards themselves being primarily animal indicates the totemic characteristic of purpose fulfillment through shared identity with the totem animal.

[52] Carocci, *Ritual and Honor*, 26.

[53] Ibid., 29.

[54] Patrick Scott Smith, "The Psychology of Totemism" in *The Year 2010 Proceedings of the ASSR-SW,* ed. Jon K. Loessin (Dallas, 2010), 56.

remind and bring to the surface of consciousness a consuming flush of identity which the individual shares with the collective purpose.

The sacred implements of war and peace: the Hockey stick, the sacred sword and peace pipe. While humans add meaning to existence by making some objects special through mythical origin and emanating power, meaning is further added when common objects also take on a level of sacredness.

Because of the existential situation, each person's vulnerability creates poignant dependency on others. Collective effort and community is therefore immediate. But through the vicarious-use of things, community also involves a collective of things. Our reliance on others is matched only by our reliance on the objects we use in everyday life. In conjunction with dependency, with developed event-retention, there is an increased awareness about others and things and the relationship of self to others and things, which become possessions to be cherished and protected. Therefore, attachment to others and to products crafted is intensified and infused with emotion,[55] which is enriched from a history of use: a favorite golf club, gun, tool, toy, car, bowling ball, etc. An object can engender emotional involvement symbolizing special relationships: a gift from a friend or loved one or a wedding ring. Or it can represent personal or political agreements, loyalty or membership to a specific society or cause by way of rings, weapons, personal ornaments, etc.

In the NHL more than any other piece of equipment or facet of the game, the one article players most fret over is their stick. The construction of the stick is done in close concert between manufacturer and player. Crafting one can be a complex affair. The shaft can be heavy or light, stiff or supple. The lie can be high or low, the blade straight or curved. It can be made of wood, graphite or composite. It can be one piece or two. But when the intangible "feel" is right to the player, the player and the stick are one; it becomes alive and is considered as a lover or brother and loving it is necessary to make it perform. Many superstitions are associated with the stick. Some talk to them, carve letters or numbers into them, place them in certain locations before the game; some will not let the stick touch the ground.[56]

Concerning the sword as sacred object, Wheeler observes,

[55] The relationship of mind to things and events in existence is more than conceptual. There is an intimacy and emotion of expectation. Failure to meet expectation brings with it degrees of elation or depression. While we conceptually understand the material purpose for which a bridge serves, our psychological relation to it is still intimate. The bridge serves a purpose in getting a thing done, a goal met, a meeting accomplished. When it works, satisfaction is maintained, but when a bridge fails shock and disappointment result. Could one postulate then, there is nothing known with which we do not have an intimate relation? Is there any knowledge that does not carry with it a concern? In the study of the sun, the evidence that life is dependent on its current course of action becomes a concern to the scientist to detect and measure variations from that course of action which could spell disaster. And the same with studying oceans, lakes, streams, ice, glaciers, snow and ground sources of water. The right balance between us and these things means health and well-being, an ever present concern. Because of the emotional attachment that is thus created when others and things are affected in a negative way--taken, harmed or destroyed--discomfort is experienced and the event is remembered, not just as something that is uncomfortable or bad, but something perceived as evil. Another consideration of emotional connection to scientific inquiry would be in the areas of history and astronomy. While not as laden with quality of life concerns, their prime mover certainly seems to be one of curiosity and the question here becomes, is curiosity also an emotional manifestation or fulfillment of psychological need?

[56] Podnieks, *Hockey Superstitions*, 17-19.

> The divine origins of swords and their role in establishing civilization epitomizes the founding myth of many societies, especially in the ancient Near East. Accounts of the discovery of the hidden treasure in Zaphon at Ugarit tell how sacred weapons were given in order to aid in the reestablishment of the cosmic order . . . The relationship of the divine smith and the first king is widespread in the cosmogony mythologies of the ancient Near East. Biblical tradition preserves the link in the accounts of Enoch bringing down swords and the other implements of civilization to a fallen humanity as reminders of their current state. Muslim exegesis on Q 57:25 maintains that swords and metallurgy related to weapons were revealed by God because of humanity's fallen state.[57]

As Yumoto reveals, "Through the mist and fog of antiquity their remains the Three Sacred Treasures of Japan," the sacred mirror, the comma-shaped beads and the sword. The fact the sword is listed as one of the three most highly prized national treasures indicates the sword is considered more then just a weapon. That swords are often mounted or set on stands and focally placed, indicates an invitation for veneration. In ancient times, possessing characteristics of purity, rarity and value, it was not uncommon for them to be given as votive offering to the gods. Later, when the sword became the symbol of the samurai code, it came to possess further spiritual qualities.[58]

Another common object having special meaning and ceremonial use by the American Indian was the "peace" pipe. Like most sacred objects with supernatural origin, the Sioux held in high esteem a pipe given to them by a white buffalo calf.[59] As well, the Pawnee believed theirs came as a gift from the sun.[60] Though other plants were used, the main ingredient smoked in the pipe was tobacco.[61] Other forms of ingestion included chewing, sniffing or mixing in drinks. First cultivated by Arawak Indians of the West Indies, the use of tobacco moved north to the Algonquians then west to the Great Plains.[62] Eventually pipe and tobacco culture covered almost all areas of North America except the Arctic and parts of the Sub-arctic. Secular applications included stimulation in times of stress, the curing of disease and wounds, as an anesthetic and for physical comfort and pleasure. But most important to the American Indian, pipe and tobacco use became a sacred activity, becoming part of ritual ceremony connected to war, peace, puberty, harvest and death. The care and smoking of the pipe as a sacred object was central to the Plains and Prairie Indians, "serving as a symbolic channel to the spirit world." [63]

The most sacred pipe was the "calumet" from the French word *chalumeau* which means "tube" or "reeds."[64] The pipe-head itself was often made of red catlinite quarried from southwest Minnesota. Though the Comanche, Ute, Bannock and Shoshone used a soft

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[57] Wheeler, *Mecca and Eden,* 43-44.
[58] John M. Yumoto, *The Samurai Sword: A Handbook* (North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 1958), 16.
[59] Carl Waldman, *Encyclopedia of Native American Tribes,* rev. ed. (New York: Checkmark Books, 1999), 21.
[60] Marz Minor and Nono Minor, *American Indian Craft Book* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 142.
[61] *Kinnikinnik,* a mixture of tobacco and willow bark, was also used. Carl Waldman, *Encyclopedia,* 81.
[62] Whether pipes were widely used by North American Indians before the introduction of tobacco from the south is a question. That tobacco is the main ingredient used in sacred pipes and the proliferation of both were relatively concurrent makes reasonable the idea pipe use by North American Indians before tobacco was minimal
[63] Waldman, *Atlas of the North American Indian* (New York: Facts on File, 2000), 71.
[64] Minor, *American Indian Craft,* 142.

greenish stone, the Iroquois ones came with yellow, red, brown and black hues.[65] The stem was a long section of wood or reed and could be, as the missionary Hennepin relates, up to two and a half feet long.[66] Playing an important role in many ceremonies, the long stemmed pipe was central to the Calumet Ceremony, which spread in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries from the Pawnees to the Sioux and Algonquians. The Iroquois eventually adopted it in the form of the Eagle Dance. The calumet was so revered it provided safe passage for those carrying it.[67] That it provided protection because it was understood as an emblem of trade, friendship and alliance is indicated when, in the 1670s, at the urging of local natives, the French explorers Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet brought one with them for safe passage as they traveled down the Mississippi.[68]

The Fox, with their three chiefs of peace, war and religious ceremony, used the sacred pipe in their respective ceremonies and councils. When contemplating war, the long stemmed pipe was decorated with red feathers. When village matters were discussed, the pipe was adorned with white ones. Thus the sacred pipe was not just an instrument used to promote or symbolize peace, but was used in religious ceremony and in times of war.[69]

The Menominee tribe of Algonquians, living along the western Great Lakes, used the long stemmed pipes to make peace, prepare for war and cure the sick. They, like the Potawatomi, another Great Lake Algonquian tribe, used the sacred pipe in initiation and other ceremonies of the Midewiwin Society (also known as the Grand Medicine Society) an exclusive organization with elaborate ritual and ceremony.[70]

Important in daily and ritual use, the pipe, as we have seen, like other often used items, would gain esteem as an object cherished; with that as foundation, the pipe would also become sacred, considering its functional nature.

Much of the sacred meaning attached to pipes comes from the common rationale of like=like effect, so often and necessarily employed by primary people. This, combined with what was not known, explains the pipe-to-spirit connection, which was assumed and which facilitated the idea, pipe use was supremely important and the object itself extremely sacred.

With no physical delineation like the body of a tree or animal, smoke appears to behave differently. Since it suspends itself in midair, moves upward and freely without restraint, the assumption is natural smoke would have spiritual properties. That the spirit world is largely above and in the air and since smoke rises, the pipe would be a natural medium for connection to the spirit world.

For the same reason primary people built edifices to be close to celestial beings because they did not know the properties and distance of the sun, moon and stars, they also were unaware of the physics of heat and smoke in relation to the atmosphere or the effect of nicotine on the brain. Thus the mental effect of calmness, euphoria and alertness which results from smoking tobacco combined with the spirit like characteristics of smoke itself would have added to the conviction the pipe was a special and sacred object, one which could be used to convey influence on the spirit world. In his sharing of Indian traditions and teachings, James Audlin relates such Latokan ideas when it comes to the use and purpose of the sacred pipe.

> We put the wooden stem to our lips, for that is where we live, at the juncture

[65] Ibid., 142, 150.
[66] Richard White, "Expansion and Exodus" in *The Native Americans: An Illustrated History*, ed. Betty and Ian Ballantine (Atlanta, GA: Turner Publishing, Inc., 1993), 272.
[67] Ibid., 272. Minor, *American Indian Craft*, 142.
[68] Jay Miller, "Blending Worlds" in Native Americans, 167.
[69] Waldman, *Encyclopedia*, 81, 136.
[70] Ibid., 132, 201.

> of Heaven and Earth, but at the other end of the Sacred Pipe we hold those feathers and that stone, and then we speak with "visible breath" (*niya taniya,* a term that refers to the ever presence of Spirit), exhaling the smoke that carries our prayers up to the highest Heaven. As the White Buffalo Calf Women taught, when we stand on the Earth and reach up to Heaven with the stem of the Pipe, we become trees, our feet-roots going into the Earth, our arm-branches reaching into the Sky; as she taught, we become a living bridge of prayer, a rainbow, the Sacred Hoop itself, uniting the Sacred Above with the Sacred Below.[71]

Conclusion: Homo Sapiens-Vulnerabilis

The dynamic of psychological reaction to the existential situation is complex, and though we have dealt here in part, the one thing we can know is all things human can be traced back to the inherited condition of physical vulnerability and the cognitive capacity needed to survive. With that capacity came the necessary vicarious-use of material things--from building to tool making--which made essential the capacity to recollect and necessary the association of ideas. Because of the declension of natural instincts and personal physical assets, survival became and remains more completely based on cognitive function involving an assumption of knowing in contrast with what is not known. Commensurate to more complete memory,[72] there emerged a complete awareness as to the uncertainty of existence and an emotional dependence on others. It is at this juncture religious notion began.

The state of acute vulnerability matched with emotional attachment to others combined with the recollection of one's own and other's limited existence brought to being the desire and strategy to continue after death. The need to know, through associative reasoning, in the face of what was not known, coincidental to the relatively certain mirror of vicarious-use, served as the basis and template for religious notions and their related ritual processes. For example, for early humans not knowing the physical properties of blood, but seeing an animal die when blood leaves it, made rational the universal assumption blood contained magical properties. The associative reasoning to the observed fact of life that commonly presented itself, "for something to live something must die" made logical the universal practice of sacrifice. Not knowing their extreme distance, that the moon and stars appear close made plausible the idea of getting close to the gods, who were associated with them, by erecting edifices reaching upward or by placing alters on mountains or sending messages to them, as the Chinese were to do, by way of kites. The related rituals to these basic assumptions were mirrored in the everyday functions of vicarious-use, which gave rise to the assumption of control over things beyond control through magic and superstitious practice. The monotony and meaninglessness in existence is also countered through the invention of exertion through sports, war,[73] and counter forces in the realm of the

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[71] James David Autlin, *Circle of Life: Traditional Teachings of Native American Elders* (Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishing, 2006), 185. While this is a modern telling of what are reputed to be traditional ideas handed down from prior generations, it does appear to contain motifs and rationale which reach back to earlier times.

[72] Made more so with the advent of oral traditions and writing.

[73] I think it is important to note war is a facet of human nature contradictory to the purpose of preservation of the species, and no rational justification can be given to excuse its use in solving problems. Though the socially cohesive ideas of shared identification and purpose fulfillment for a community may be facilitated by war--and though war, sports and religion share common characteristics, are intertwined and interactive--the reason for war is still elusive, complex and contradictory. Other considerations have to be taken into account: population migration and

supernatural. The landscape of social reality is further animated by the identification with the totem animal and the creation of sacred objects emanating contagious power. The common practices of superstitious ritual found in the arenas of sports, war and religion are all the result of psychological reaction to the existential condition of physical vulnerability, that we as a species are not just *Homo sapiens*, but *Homo sapiens-vulnerabilis*. [74]

Biographical Note

Patrick Scott Smith is a business owner, writer and independent scholar. He has been working on the facet of psychology in religion from an anthropological/existential point of view and has been presenting material for the AAR, ASOR and ASSR in the Central, Southwest and Southeast regions. He is also a member of the Missouri Academy of Science and presents his social-scientific views to that association as well. At present he is working on a book relevant to the anthropological/religious interests mentioned.

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encroachment; contention over resources; failed economic models; even the greed and ego of individual leaders, have and will play a part in the start of wars.

[74] After discussion with Pauline Nugent (Classics and Biblical Hebrew, MSU), *vulnerabilis,* as opposed to *invalidus, infirmitas or fragilis*, seems at present the best choice to portray, for reasons of connotation as well as meaning, the idea humans are wise (*homo sapien*) because of our physical condition of vulnerability (thus *homo sapien-vulnerabilis)*. *Vulnerabilis* literally means, "capable of being wounded", but also portrays the idea of "vulnerability" as in being "weak" or "vulnerable" to the elements.

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Money in the Maqatir Monastery

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Introduction

Few things are more exciting at an archaeological excavation than finding coins, probably because they provide a direct and tangible connection with history. There is often writing on these coins which is an important factor in Archaeology because a readable coin can help to date the stratum in which it was found. On June1, 2011, my team in Field C at Khirbet el-Maqatir found nine coins; eight of them were from a single locus inside the central apse of the church. Three other coins were found in an Early Roman house on the east end of the site. In December 2011, another eleven coins were recovered. The table below provides the details of these 23 coins.

Table 1: Kh. El-Maqatir 2011 - The Numismatic Finds

Date of coin	Wt. (gm)	Diam.(mm)	Description
285-246 BCE	3.18	16-17	Ptolemy II
125-103 BCE	2.45	14	Hasmonean (John Hyrcanus I)
125-103 BCE	1.75	14	Hasmonean (John Hyrcanus I)
125-80 BCE	1.33	13	Hasmonean
125-80 BCE	1.76	13-14	Hasmonean
c. 80 BCE	0.62	10	Alexander Jannaeus
41/2 CE	2.43	17	Agrippa I
59-62 CE	1.70	15	Festus (?) under Nero
67/8 CE	2.63	17	Jewish War
379-395 CE	0.86	12.5-13.5	Byzantine (Theodosius I)
383-392 CE	1.53	13	Byzantine
383-392 CE	0.88	12	Byzantine
383-395 CE	1.06	13.5	Byzantine
383-395 CE	0.97	11	Byzantine
Late 4th cent. CE	1.01	12-13	Byzantine
5th cent. CE	0.20	10	Byzantine
Late 5th – Early 6th cent CE.	0.18	6.5-7	Byzantine
Late 5th – Early 6th cent CE.	0.12	8	Byzantine (?)
Late 5th – Early 6th cent CE.	0.29	6-8	Byzantine(?)
Late 5th – Early 6th cent CE.	0.10	7-8	Byzantine
Late 5th – Early 6th cent CE.	0.66	9	Byzantine
5th cent. CE (?)	0.42	14	Byzantine (?) Token?
1884	2.60	21	British

The Maqatir Coins

The oldest coin was from the mid-third century B.C. (Ptolemy II 285-246 B.C.), and the most recent was a British coin from the nineteenth century. This range of dates spanning two millennia, yet appearing in the same stratum, requires some explanation since the assumed dates for the ecclesiastical complex are from the fourth to the sixth centuries. The initial pottery readings and the coin dates confirm this. Thirteen of the coins date to the Late Roman or Byzantine timeframe. Six of the coins are from the three centuries before Christ. Five of the six were minted by the Hasmonean rulers. Three of the coins were from the first century A.D., including a coin of Porcius Festus (Acts 26) and a coin from Year Two of the First Jewish Revolt. The final first century coin and the focus of this article was minted by Herod Agrippa I; it was the first from the New Testament period to be found at Khirbet el-Maqatir after nine seasons of excavation. Previously, coins were limited to the intertestamental period, the latest being a coin of Herod the Great that was dated to his third year as king, 37 B.C.

Agrippa I was the son of Aristobulus IV and Berenice, the grandson of Herod the Great, and the father of Agrippa II (Acts 25-26); he ruled as king over much of his grandfather's realm from A.D. 37 to 44. The Agrippa I coin dates to the sixth year of his reign, A.D. 41/42. Agrippa I was in many ways an enigma. He was a close friend of Emperor Caligula (A.D. 37-41) and also enjoyed the favor of Claudius who came to the throne in A.D. 41. Claudius was emperor when the Maqatir coin was struck. Agrippa I minted coins bearing the images of these Caesars and various pagan likenesses. On the other hand, he went to great lengths to keep the local Jewish population happy. He persuaded Caligula to abandon his bizarre intentions to erect a statue of himself in the Jerusalem temple (Josephus, *Ant*. 18.8.2-9). Agrippa I also ingratiated himself toward the Jewish leaders by ignominiously becoming the first ruler to persecute the nascent Christian church (Acts 12:1–3). This was certainly in keeping with the policies of Emperor Claudius who according to Acts 18.2 expelled all Jews (traditional and messianic) from Rome. In *The Twelve Caesars*, Suetonius poignantly confirms that "There were continual uprisings on account of Chrestus" (*Life of Claudius* 25:4). Chrestus is a reference to Christ.[i]

Agrippa's title on the obverse of the coin is *BASILEUS*, the Greek word for "king." This is in keeping with the Roman custom of lauding the ruler who issued a coin, and not surprisingly, was the exact title attributed to him in Acts 12:1. The reverse of Roman coins was normally for propaganda purposes, but a client king like Agrippa wisely placed three sheaves of barley, a traditional Jewish symbol.

The Mishnah records that during the Feast of Tabernacles in A.D. 41 he publically read Deuteronomy 17:15 which states, "You may not put a foreigner over you who is not your brother." When Agrippa, who like all of the Herodian rulers was only part Jewish, began to weep, the people responded, "Grieve not, Agrippa; you are our brother! You are our brother!" (Sotah 7:8). This sort of adulation led to Agrippa's gruesome death at Caesarea Maritima in A.D. 44 at the tender age of thirty four. After a speech, perhaps in the still standing amphitheatre, the crowd proclaimed that his words were those of a god (clearly idolatry), and "Because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died" (Acts 12:23). Interestingly, the same event was recorded by the Jewish historian Josephus (*Ant.* 19.8.2), a fascinating and important synchronism between biblical and secular texts.

Figure 1: The Agrippa Coin

Circulation of Ancient Coins

All of this is informative, but it begs the question, what is a first century coin doing in a fourth to sixth century conobium[ii] type monastery? There are four possible explanations for this seemingly odd occurrence. First, one of the monks may have been a coin collector. This is pure speculation and highly unlikely. Second, maybe the monastery and church are much older than first thought. Although recent discoveries of early churches at places like Megiddo (*circa* 230) have forced a rethinking of the transition from the *domus ekklesia* or house church to basilicas or public buildings devoted to Christian worship, this second possibility also seems unlikely, especially with the appearance of a possible side apse indicating a later church (Tsafrir 1993:12) . Third, the early coins may have been part of the fill used to level out the area between the jagged bedrock to create a flat surface for the church and monastery. Most of the early coins came from below floor level (888.23), but some were found above floor level. This could be explained by scavaging or earthquake damage. Third, in Roman and Byzantine times coins may have remained in circulation for hundreds of years. This appears to be the most plausible explanation. Classical numismatist David Vagi cites examples of this prolonged circulation:

It is well-documented both by literary and archaeological evidence that ancient coins often circulated for centuries. An excellent example is the countermarking of older, worn coins in the east by the emperor Vespasian in the early A.D. 70s. The majority of these denarii were at least a century old at the time they were countermarked. The issuance of Imperial cistophori by the emperor Hadrian (117-138) is similarly convincing. Most (if not all) of the planchets used were older cistophori issued some 100 to 150 years earlier. We have no reason to doubt that these “host” coins (the coins that were overstruck) had been in circulation up until the time they were withdrawn for re-coining (1999:19-20).

Furthermore, a bronze coin of Domitian (A.D. 81-96) was in circulation in Spain until 1636, when it was re-coined in the financial reforms of Philip IV (Blanchet 1907:26). Coins minted under Constantine (A.D. 323-337) were still circulating in parts of southern France during the reign of Napoleon III (1852-1870) (Friedensburg 1926:3). Due to the high inflation of the third century A.D., older Roman coinage appears to have been used much longer than contemporary money. The coinage from Pompeii confirms that a significant number of Republican coins (prior to Julius Caesar) were still in circulation at the time the

city was buried by the volcanic eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79, and they remained in circulation for another thirty to forty years (Harl 1996:18). This is over 150 years.

The Agrippa I coin, like all bronze coins, would have remained in use much longer, especially in the provinces, than its gold and silver counterparts previously mentioned (Harl 1996:257). So, it is certainly possible, indeed probable, that the Agrippa I coin had remained in circulation for four centuries. However, it seems to stretch the limits of plausibility to assume that the third century coin found in the same stratum could have remained in continual circulation. As always, archaeology raises as many questions as it answers.

Conclusion

In an ironic twist of fate, Agrippa I who died because of his refusal to give glory to God, is 2,000 years later buttressing the historicity of the biblical narrative. Many more coins are under the accumulated debris of millennia, just waiting to tantalize us with their mysterious stories. Maybe you can be the volunteer who finds the next one!

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[i] Other early references can be found in the following sources: Josephus (*Antiquities*, Books 18:3:3), Tacitus (*Annals*, Volume 15:44:3), and Pliny the Younger (*Epistles*, 10:96-97).

[ii] Ascetic monasteries are referred to as Laura, and communal monasteries known as conobium.

The Grand Errand and the Holy War: An Essay on Religion and the American Revolution

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Abstract

This study will consider the ideas of historians and social theorists (Bernard Bailyn, Willliam G. McLoughlin, Staughton Lynd, Carl Bridenbaugh, Alan Heimert, Richard Hofstadter, Alice Baldwin, William H. Kenney, Rhys Isaac, Jack P. Green, Nathan O. Hatch, Edwin S. Gaustad, Wesley M. Gewehr, Clarence C. Goen, and Thomas Kidd) pertaining to the influence of religion on the American Revolution. The focus will be on the importance of historical interpretation and critical analysis of the role of religion in the coming of the Revolution and in the conduct of this important event in the American experience.

How events fall in reality may, as some contend, fall accidentally, but to the historian reflecting back upon them they do not appear accidental. The American Revolution can be seen today as an outgrowth of what preceded it. The crucial question, at this point, is, "What preceded it?" Identifying those events and their relationship to one another and to the Revolution are important points to consider.

Historians have tended to emphasize various aspects of those years leading up to the armed conflict known as the War for Independence. Emphases have risen and then fallen, as new ideas have emerged. An important emphasis in revolutionary historiography has been the ideological thesis of Bernard Bailyn. His contention is that

> the outbreak of the Revolution was not the result of social discontent, or of economic disturbances, or of rising misery, or of those mysterious social strains that seem to beguile the imaginations of historians straining to find peculiar predispositions to upheaval. Nor was there a transformation of mob behavior or of the lives of the "inarticulate" in the pre-Revolutionary years that accounts for the disruption of Anglo-American politics. The rebellion took place in a basically prosperous if temporarily disordered economy and in communities whose effective social distances (despite the successful revival of a few commercialized "feudal" proprietorships) remained narrow enough and whose mobility, however marginally it may have slowed from earlier days, was still high enough to absorb most group discontents. Nor was it the consequence simply of the maturing of the economy and the desires of American businessmen for greater economic autonomy, or of the inevitable growth of infant institutions and communities to the point where challenges to the parental authority became inescapable: neither economies nor institutions nor communities are doomed to grow through phases of oedipal conflict. American resistance in the 1760s and 1770s was a response to acts of power deemed arbitrary, degrading, and uncontrollable--a response, in itself objectively reasonable, that was inflamed to the point of explosion by ideological currents generating fears everywhere in America that irresponsible and self-seeking adventurers--what the twentieth century would call political gangsters--had gained the power of the English government and were

> turning first, for reasons that were variously explained, to that Rhineland of their aggressions, the colonies.[1]

Such a view of the Revolution, Bailyn argues, is "only a beginning of an understanding of the meaning of the Revolution as a whole and of its role in shaping the course of American history. Yet seeing the origins of the Revolution this way makes it possible to approach that ultimate stage of maturity in historical interpretation where partisanship is left behind, where the historian can find an equal humanity in all the participants, the winners and the losers, where he can embrace the whole of the event, see it from all sides, mark out the latent limitations within which all the actors were obliged to act, and trace the influence of the event until it fades indistinguishably into the flow of history that succeeds it."[2]

Bailyn's thesis injected a new perspective into Revolutionary historiography, as the reviews and reactions to his work have indicated.[3] However, his approach diverted attention from significant factors that did lead to the military conflict in 1776. His sweeping statement that "the Revolution was not the result of social discontent"[4] seems to radically ignore the religious discontent characteristic of this period from the 1740s through and beyond the War for Independence. In his *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* Bailyn does admit the significance of religious ideas on the revolutionary ideology. He limits the significant influence of the religious ideology to that of New England Puritanism. He does point out that the Puritan ideological contribution to revolutionary thought was not transient but lasting, yet emphasizes that this was only one of several "disparate strands of thought." The singular important cohesive factor is not American at all, but British "radical social and political thought of the English Civil War and of the Commonwealth period." Such an approach does not dismiss the native religious forces, but it does discount their significance.[5]

The Great Awakening did precede the Revolution making certain that there would be religious influences leading to the revolt and during the Revolution itself.[6] William G. McLoughlin contends that "the Great Awakening was really the beginning of America's

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[1] Bernard Bailyn, "The Central Themes of the American Revolution: An Interpretation." in *Essays on the American Revolution*, ed. by Stephen 0. Kurtz and James H. Hutson (Williamsburg, Virginia. 1973), pp. 12-13 (hereinafter cited as Kurtz-Hutson).

[2] *Ibid*., p. 15

[3] The follow are several scholarly reviews of Bailyn's *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*: Alan S. Brown in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 54 (Dec., 1967), pp. 636-637; Richard D. Brown in *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 40 (Dec., 1967), pp. 577-579; Trevor Colbourn in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 73 (Jan., 1968), pp. 112-113; Jack P. Greene in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 73 (Oct., 1967), pp. 209-211; Z. S. Fink in *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 11 (1968), pp. 588-590; Donald R. Harkness in *American Quarterly*, Vol. 20 Supplement (Summer, 1968), p. 336; Jackson T. Main in The Wisconsin Magazine of History, Vol. 51 (Spring, 1968), pp. 260-262; Charles R. Ritcheson in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 4 (Autumn, 1970), pp. 95-97; Bruce E. Steiner in *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 57 (Apr., 1971), pp. 161-162. See also Harry S. Stout, "Religion, Communications, and the Ideological Origins of the American Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 34 (Oct., 1977), pp. 519-541.

[4] *Ibid*., p. 12.

[5] Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 32-34 (hereinafter cited as Bailyn, *Origins*).

[6] Cedric B. Cowing, *The Great Awakening and the American Revolution: Colonial Thought in the 18th Century* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1971), p. 1 (hereinafter cited as Cowing).

identity as a nation—the starting point of the Revolution."[7] Thus, it is easily understood why he would see the Revolution as "a religious as well as a political movement."[8]

Great movements, such as the American Revolution, often overshadow their setting. They are cataclysmic, violent and spectacular events, while their setting, often a more profound, lasting and massive force, is not considered. Such is the relationship of the Great Awakening and the Revolution.[9] The 1740 Awakening was a profound, deep, lasting, spiritual revolution[10] that reached beyond the 1776 War into the 19th century. It is evidence of the significance of religion in American thought and life.

Religion has deep roots in the American psyche. The settlement of the American colonies particularly was carried on in a deeply religious era. The Puritan tradition is but one example of the profound influence of religious ideas on the formation of the American consciousness. This group of English settlers who stepped ashore in New England in the mid-seventeenth century offers much that enables us to understand the American experience generally, and for the purposes of this essay, the place of religion in the American Revolution. However, it must be kept in mind that others had equal influence and significance in American life and thought.

The Revolution that grew in the English colonies involved more than political, social and economic grievances. Indeed the war was fought with more than bullets and bayonets. As Bernard Bailyn has aptly pointed out in his *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* ideas were as potent as the guns that boomed at Lexington and Concord. However, the question is, to modify a familiar question, "When was the first idea fired?" To enlarge on the question, and to emphasize that there was more involved than just social, political and economic factors, it must be pointed out that religious ferment in the colonies preceded the crises involving stamps, tea and other taxable items. The Great Awakening highlighted three issues—the concept of chosenness, the fear of episcopacy and the passion for religious liberty—that would be used as intellectual ammunition in the Revolutionary War. These three issues form what can be essentially termed "the grand errand."[11]

The Grand Errand

Puritans came to New England with a sense of divine mission, and they indelibly (along with other groups who saw themselves on a similar divine mission) printed that idea upon the American psyche. What historians have called "Manifest Destiny" is firmly rooted in this idea of divine mission. The Puritans came to establish "a city set on a hill"[12] as an example to the world of a society, political establishment and pure church based on the Word of God, the Bible. As several historians have pointed out, by the beginning of the

[7] William G. McLoughlin, "The Role of Religion in the Revolution: Liberty of Conscience and Cultural Cohesion in the New Nation," in Kurtz-Hutson, p. 198.
[8] *Ibid*., p. 197.
[9] This is not to say that the Great Awakening was not spectacular, but it is to say that such a movement in the eyes of the world of politics, society and economics cannot compare with the show of war--blood, bullets and bayonets outshine Bibles, books and conversions.
[10] See the writings of Edwin Scott Gaustad, Gordon S. Wood, Carl Bridenbaugh, William G. McLoughlin, Wesley M. Gewehr, Charles H. Maxson, Clarence C. Goen, and Thomas S. Kidd on the First Great Awakening.
[11] Bailyn, *Origins*, pp. v-vii; Gordon S. Wood in "Rhetoric and Reality in the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, XXIII (January, 1966), pp. 3-32, emphasizes the significance of ideas in agreement with Bailyn (hereinafter cited as Wood).
[12] This quote comes from a passage in Matthew chapter *5.*

eighteenth century the Puritan dream was dead, but not the idea of mission—the concept of a holy errand by a chosen people.[13]

The Concept of Chosenness

Such a concept of chosenness is not unique to the Christian movement or to America, and neither is its complement—dedication to the cause. The Puritan "city set on a hill" may have died, but not the devotion to being a chosen people. It was this concept, preserved from Puritanism that pervaded the colonial mind of the early eighteenth century. This sense of chosenness thrust the colonies through the Great Awakening; into the American Revolution, and onto the creation of a nation. Another way to state this is that the grand errand, which motivated most religious groups, particularly the Puritans, to come to the colonies was the foundation for the holy war to separate from corrupt and vile England.

As Bailyn has pointed out, the literature previous to the armed conflict of 1776-1783 is dominated by sermonic tracts on the theme of religion and government. Such ideas of government, Bailyn says, "stemmed ultimately from the political and social theories of New England Puritanism, and particularly from the ideas associated with covenant theology."[14] Such an idea is broader than Puritanism and its heirs, as Alan Heimert has pointed out. Cedric Cowing stresses that the Great Awakening New Lights assumed "that America was the center of God's interest in the world" and they "were behaving like the Chosen People. They were returning to the Puritan conception of 'a city on the hill,' not to the idea of a 'howling wilderness.'"[15]

The heart of the covenant theology was the concept of chosenness. Bailyn says it like this: "the colonization of British America had been an event designed by the hand of God to satisfy his ultimate aims. America had a special place, as yet not fully revealed, in the architecture of God's intent."[16]

Such an idea of chosenness Carl Bridenbaugh says is vital to an understanding of the nature of the Revolution. The grand errand by a special, chosen people centered in religious and civil liberties. The Puritans (and others) fled tyranny and oppression to establish a society based on God's principles. They were on a divine mission to create a society where tyranny would not reign. Yet, neither their experience in the Old World, nor their sense of chosenness in the New World prevented them from becoming tyrannous toward those who differed with them, such as Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson.[17]

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[13] Cowing, pp. 8-9.
[14] Bailyn, *Origins*, p. 32.
[15] Cowing, p. 203.
[16] Bailyn, *Origins*, p. 33. Wood says that "Americans had been gradually and unwittingly preparing themselves for a mental revolution since they first came to the New World in the seventeenth century." (Wood, p. 13) It is understandable how such a quiet unwitting "mental revolution" could be overshadowed by the spectacular and catastrophic war of 1776 to 1783.
[17] See Emery Battis, *Saints and Sectaries: Anne Hutchinson and the Antinomian Controversy in the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1962); Ben Barker-Benfield, "Anne Hutchinson and the Puritan Attitude Toward Women," *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Autumn, 1972), pp. 65-96; Edith Curtis, *Anne Hutchinson: A Biography* (Cambridge: Washburn and Thomas, 1930); James F. Cooper, Jr., "Anne Hutchinson and the 'Lay Rebellion' Against the Clergy," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (Sept., 1988), pp. 381-397; Michael G. Ditmore, "A Prophetess in Her Own Country: An Exegesis of Anne Hutchinson's 'Immediate Revelation,'" *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 57, No. 2 (Apr., 2000), pp. 349-392; Amy Schrager Lang, *Prophetic Woman: Anne Hutchinson and the*

The Fear of Episcopacy

There were others who came on grand errands aside from the English Puritans. Most of the people who came to America had a special interest in coming. Baptists, Catholics, Quakers and Methodists had grand designs for society shaped by their sense of divine mission.[18] Certainly, this sense of mission was felt by the Anglicans, as Bridenbaugh points out. Early in the eighteenth century the possibility emerged that a bishop might be appointed for Anglicans in America. Queen Anne, with the consent of both the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury, was poised to name a bishop for America in 1714 when she suddenly died. Cowing points out that "the episcopal movement subsided but did not disappear and colonists learned to be watchful."[19] Their clamor for a bishop was evidence of their devotion to a special mission in America. However, their devotion drove them to support the crown against the colonies when the conflict erupted in 1776.

It was precisely, as Bridenbaugh indicates, the Anglican commitment to the episcopacy and their agitation for a bishop that led to a sense of endangered religious freedom. "Anglican bishops," Bridenbaugh writes, "became the principal symbol in the American mind of the threatened ecclesiastical tyranny."[20] This forms Bridenbaugh's basic thesis. He argues that the fear of an established Anglican church with broad ecclesiastical power was a fundamental cause of the Revolution.[21]

Problem of Dissent in the Literature of New England (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Edmund S. Morgan, "The Case Against Anne Hutchinson," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Dec., 1937), pp. 635-649; Marilyn J. Westerkamp, "Anne Hutchinson, Sectarian Mysticism, and the Puritan Order," *Church History*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (Dec., 1990), pp. 482-496 regarding actions and attitudes toward Anne Hutchinson. See James Ernst, *Roger Williams: New England Firebrand* (New York: Macmillan, 1933); James Ernst, *The Political Thought of Roger Williams* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1929); Edwin Gaustad, *Liberty of Conscience: Roger Williams in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991); W. Clark Gilpin, *The Millenarian Piety of Roger Williams* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); Samuel Hugh Brockunier, *The Irrepressible Democrat: Roger Williams* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1940); T. D. Bozeman, "Religious Liberty and the Problem of Order in Early Rhode Island," *New England Quarterly*, Vol. 45 (March 1971), pp. 44-64; Mauro Calamandrei, "Neglected Aspects of Roger Williams' Thought," *Church History*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Sep., 1952), pp. 239-258; Henry S. Burrage, "Why Was Roger Williams Banished?" *The American Journal of Theology*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Jan., 1901), pp. 1-17; LeRoy Moore, Jr., "Religious Liberty: Roger Williams and the Revolutionary Era," *Church History*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Mar., 1965), pp. 57-76; Alan Simpson, "How Democratic Was Roger Williams," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Jan., 1956), pp. 53-67; George Albert Stead, "Roger Williams and the Massachusetts-Bay," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Jun., 1934), pp. 235-257; Clinton Rossiter, "Roger Williams on the Anvil of Experience," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring, 1951), pp. 14-21; Perry Miller, *Roger Williams: His Contribution to the American Tradition* (Indianapolis; Bobbs-Merrill, 1953); Edmund Morgan, *Roger Williams: The Church and the State* (New York: Norton, 1967); John M. Barry, *Roger Williams and The Creation of the American Soul: Church, State, and the Birth of Liberty* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2012) regarding the New England treatment of and attitude toward Roger Williams.

[18] Cowing, pp. 30-39, 178-179, 201-206.

[19] *Ibid*., pp. 25, 29-30.

[20] Carl Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas. Personalities, and Politics, 1689-1775* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 20 (hereinafter cited as Bridenbaugh).

[21] *Ibid*., p. xx.

Such a view fits into Bailyn's concept of the origins of the Revolution, yet it conflicts with Bailyn's emphasis. Bridenbaugh sees the possibility of an American bishop as a legitimate and real fear, whereas at times it appears that Bailyn accepts one of Richard Hofstadter's sub-theses in *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*—that paranoia plagues the American religious and political experience. This view of Hofstadter holds that the threat of or supposed reality of conspiracy is a dominate theme in the American religio-political experience.[22]

Bridenbaugh is joined by Alan Heimert[23] in his contention that the threat of an American episcopacy was real, and not supposed. He, too, places stress on this being an important factor in paving the way for war with the mother country. The threat was real. Both authors quote an incident involving itinerant evangelist George Whitefield. Bridenbaugh gives the more lengthy account and quotation of Whitefield's words. Speaking with two American clergymen Whitefield said in April, 1764:

> I can't in conscience leave the town without acquainting you with a secret. My heart bleeds for America. 0 poor New England! There is a deep laid plot against both your civil and religious liberties, and they will be lost. Your golden days are at an end. You have nothing but trouble before you. My information comes from the best authority in Great Britain. I was allowed to speak of the affair in general, but enjoined not to mention particulars.[24]

For both Heimert and Bridenbaugh, Whitefield is a key figure. He is the "transatlantic" religious link between Great Britain and the colonies. Given his role in the Great Awakening as an itinerant evangelist traveling the length and breadth of the colonies, it is easy to see his significance. William Howland Kenney in "George Whitefield, Dissenter Priest of the Great Awakening, 1739-1741," makes this same point emphasizing that he was "the friend and defender of dissenters from the Church of England: the colonial dissenter priest."[25] Whitefield, in a way, was a defender of religious liberty. As Alice Baldwin writes:

> Certain of Whitefield's teachings are of special significance. He believed that there were certain fundamental divine laws which a Christian subject must first obey and that he had the right to question and, if necessary, to break rules and laws that were contrary to these principles. He preached this freedom openly. When accused of breaking the church canons, he wrote to the Bishop of London: "Your Lordship knows full well that Canons and other church laws are good and obligatory when conformable to the laws of Christ and agreeable to the liberties of a free people; but when invented and compiled by men of little hearts and bigoted principles.. .and

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[22] Bailyn, *Origins*, pp. *144-159.* See Richard Hofstadter's *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* and his *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays*.

[23] Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press,
1966), pp. 35 *1-352,* 359-378 (hereinafter cited as Heimert).

[24] Bridenbaugh, p. 244; Heimert, pp. 351f.

[25] William Howland Kenney, 3rd, "George Whitefield, Dissenter Priest of the Great Awakening, 1739-1741," *William and Mary Quarterly*, XXVI (January, 1969), 93. See the many biographies of George Whitefield, particularly Harry S. Stout's *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991).

> when made use of only as ends to bind up the hands of a zealous few, they may be very legally broken."[26]

Thomas S. Kidd does not address the evangelical anxiety regarding the appointment of an Anglican bishop at all in his study on the First Great Awakening. He stresses in his chapter dealing with evangelicals and the revolution[27] that there were four distinct groups of evangelicals related to the war—the Patriot evangelicals, the reformist evangelicals, the Loyalist evangelicals, and the sojourning evangelicals. The point that Kidd argues is that scholars should remember that such "diverse responses . . . demonstrate the dangers of viewing early evangelicals as a monolith."[28] In his study of religion and the American Revolution, Kidd deals specifically with the question of the appointment of an Anglican bishop for the American colonies. Kidd focuses on the electrifying sermon by Pastor Jonathan Mayhew the Sunday marking the anniversary of King Charles I's execution during the English Civil War in which Mayhew warned about keeping "imperious bishops" out of America. He "saw the prospect of a resident bishop as a pretext to begin depriving Americans of their religious liberties."[29]

The Passion for Religious Liberty

When religious liberty is mentioned there is no question that the Baptists were ardent supporters for such a measure. It was part of their grand errand in the New World. William G. McLoughlin, Isaac Rhys, and William Warren Sweet, among others, have pointed out this group's persistence at this point. The Baptists' "grand errand" was religious liberty. Their struggle was not just against Anglican intolerance, but it was, also, congregational establishmentarian intolerance. In this sense the Baptist struggle was against a tyranny from without, as well as, within. For them it was a struggle over "who should rule at home," as well as, the threat to impose a foreign ecclesiastical power in the presence of an Anglican bishop. Such a struggle at home fits into Staughton Lynd's concept of the revolutionary conflict.[30]

The Baptist struggle has received recent treatment in two articles. Rhys Isaac examines the nature of the Baptists' challenge to the traditional order in Virginia from 1765 to 1775. He contends, in opposition to Wood and Bailyn, that there was "a radical social revolt, indicative of real strains within society." To demonstrate such he uses the Baptists and their struggle for religious liberty.[31] From the same basis William G. McLoughlin demonstrates the tension over religious liberty in his article "Massive Civil Disobedience as a Baptist Tactic in 1773," and in his book *New England Dissent, 1630-1833*. In his article, to illustrate the struggle at home, McLoughlin says:

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[26] Alice Baldwin, *The New England Clergy and the American Revolution* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1928), p. *57* (hereinafter cited as Baldwin).
[27] Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 283-307 (Hereinafter cited as Kidd, *Awakening*).
[28] *Ibid*., p. 291.
[29] Thomas S. Kidd, *God of Liberty: A Religious History of the American Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), pp. 60-61 (hereinafter cited as Kidd, *Liberty*).
[30] Cf. Staughton Lynd, "Who Should Rule at Home? Dutchess County, New York, in the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, XVIII (July, 1961), pp. 330-359.
[31] Rhys Isaac, "Evangelical Revolt: The Nature of the Baptists' Challenge to the Traditional Order in Virginia, 1765 to *1775," William and Mary Quarterly*, XXXI (July, 1974), p. 368.

> Appropriating the slogan of the Sons of Liberty (to make the tactic even more embarrassing to the Patriots), the Baptists claimed that they were fighting for "No Taxation without Representation." Only it was a tax levied by their neighbors and not by Parliament which they were protesting--taxes collected annually from all inhabitants of the province for the support of the ministers and the maintenance of the meetinghouses of the favored Congregational churches.[32]

The dovetailing of social, religious and political dissent to remember Bailyn again, is uniquely portrayed in the American Revolutionary Era.[33] The Great Awakening of the 1740s and the Second Great Awakening of the 1800s were integral parts of the Revolution. The Second Awakening represents the culmination of the revolution begun in 1740 by Edwards and Whitefield. Such is Alan Heimert's argument. As some have extended the period of the Revolution to 1815, Heimert moves the beginning of the revolt from around 1776 to the 1740s. "What the colonies had awakened to in 1740," he argues, was none other than independence and rebellion." Indeed, Heimert goes on to state that "the spirit aroused in 1740 proved to be that of American nationalism."[34]

The threat of a political and ecclesiastical conspiracy and the driving passion for religious liberty fired by the sense of uniqueness—a concept of chosenness—drove the colonial clergy to make comparisons between the role of the colonies and that of Biblical Israel. Thus the colonies logically became the New Israel, battling against evil and corrupt England. Indeed, America was struggling against the rankest kind of evil—religious evil, Anti-Christ himself. It was the mission of the new people in the New World to share the "gospel" with the heathen—here and abroad. Thus the Great Awakening saw a rekindling of religious mission. David Brainerd, fired by revivalistic zeal, became a missionary to the American Indians. He illustrates the sense of mission, the idea of chosenness, to lift life from paganism.

Such zeal was not rooted in the mid-eighteenth century in the "city on a hill" mission of the Puritan fathers—men such as John Winthrop—but in the settled opinion that America was the only hope of Christendom. Heimert notes, that according to men such as Edwards, America was "the spiritual center of Christendom."[35]

The Holy War

When you have the idea of chosenness coupled with fear of a conspiracy against that mission and the freedom to pursue it and a struggle to attain liberty at home against an establishment, you have all the makings for a revolution. Indeed, just such a combination led to the revolution becoming not just a war, but a holy war. McLoughlin, Baldwin, Bridenbaugh and Heimert agree at this point. The battle cry was, "Let the grand errand into America never be forgotten."[36] "The war," McLoughlin argues, "became a holy war against antichrist (George III)."[37] From Jonathan Edwards' view of revival as "a holy war" it was, given the

[32] William G. McLoughlin, "Massive Civil Disobedience as a Baptists Tactic in 1773," *American Quarterly*, XXI (Winter, 1969), pp. 710-727.

[33] Cf. Jack P. Greene, "The Social Origins of the American Revolution: An Evaluation and an Interpretation," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 6 (March, 1973), p. 8.

[34] Heimert, pp. 12, 94.

[35] Heimert, p. 96.

[36] Bridenbaugh, p. 13.

[37] William G. McLoughlin, "The American Revolution as a Religious Revival: 'The Millennium in One Country,"' *New England Quarterly*, XL (March, 1967), p. 107.

concept of chosenness, an easy step to baptizing the Revolution as "a holy war."[38] Indeed, Historian Kidd stresses that colonists such as Revolutionary Chaplain David Avery believed the war was "a holy struggle for freedom."[39]

The holy war, according to Heimert, is linked to the millennial ideas of Edwards and others.[40] Edwards had said, "The latter-day glory is probably to begin in America." Heimert contends that this is "a revival of the Puritan idea of New England as a 'city on a hill.'" Thus, in a word, the sense of chosenness was a driving force toward revolution.[41] In the light of this Whitefield's concept of rebellion takes on new significance. As Baldwin said, "A government which did not have the good of the people at heart did not have the sanction of God."[42] Consequently, such a government could lawfully, actually must be, opposed. On this point Baldwin and Heimert would agree, but as to the actors they would not agree. For Baldwin the liberal, Arminian clergymen were prime-movers in the Revolution, but for Heimert the conservative, Calvinist clergy are the key men. The liberals were cautious, according to Heimert, to revolt. The Calvinists, believing in the doctrine of "means," saw the Revolution as a means to inaugurate the millennium.

In this fashion the grand errand became the holy war.

Conclusion

The purpose of this essay has been to state some of the major themes in the relationship between religion and the American Revolution and to look at how historians have viewed those themes. This is not meant as an exhaustive historiographical study because only selected works have been considered. What has been attempted is to be suggestive and analytical in the survey of this connection between the war and the years that preceded it, particularly those years associated with the event known as the First Great Awakening.

After considering the issue of religion and the Revolution, it is my conclusion that the link between the two, while at first not too observable, was intimate and undeniable.
Beyond this I would say in conclusion that out of the years before, during and after the First Great Awakening that the dominate theme was the grand errand embodied in religious liberty and the grand errand of establishing a government that would honor God and assure its citizens the right to worship, witness and work for that God in both the private and public arenas.

Biographical Note

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[38] Heimert, p. 88.
[39] Kidd, *Liberty*, p. 3.
[40] Nathan 0. Hatch, "The Origins of Civil Millennialism in America: New England Clergymen, War with France, and the Revolution," William and Mary Quarterly, XXXI (July, 1974), pp. 407-430. Cf. note 37, also.
[41] Heimert, p. 96.
[42] Baldwin, p. 23.

professional meetings. The focus of his research has been on the history and present state of evangelicalism, revivalism, racism and conservative reform movements. He also writes a weekly column on history, social and political issues for newspapers and magazines.

No Help from Lazarus: The Obscurity of the Biblical Text and Its (Lack of?) Significance for the Intermediate State

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"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?"
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.
—Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *In Memoriam* XXXI

Introduction

Christian ministers are frequently called upon to answer remarkable questions formulated by the inquiring minds of local parishioners. Consider the one posed to me by Lucille Thomas, a long-time member of a congregation I served as pastor. She called one afternoon and requested that I come to her home because she had a question. Lucille lived not far from the church office, so I made the trip there in a few minutes, knocked on the door, was warmly received, and sat down. Her Bible was open to John 11 and her question voiced with Tennysonian tenor and a thin finger pointing in my direction was: "Pastor, during those four days that Lazarus lay dead, where was he?"

Lucille did not know it, but her question was mine. And it was a question with which I had struggled for decades. Growing up in church, I had heard the account of Jesus' raising of Lazarus numerous times. Even as a child, I had turned that situation over in my mind a number of times. My questions were, like Lucille's, ones which the text does not address and which I have now come to believe obliquely touch on Messianic ethics.

Where indeed was Lazarus and what was he doing? Why did he not tell his family—and, by scriptural extension, us—about his brief, presumably, glorious heavenly sojourn? And, most importantly for me, why would Jesus recall Lazarus, a man he clearly loved, back to a brutal Planet Earth only to die again by who-knows-what-means? It just did not seem "fair" to me—then or now.

In a quest for long-awaited answers to these questions, this paper will focus on a single strand within the Lazarus story. It is a strand that most Johannine commentators, adding to my distress, fail to reference. Does the account of Jesus' raising of his friend Lazarus from death provide any information related to postmortem survival between physical death and the resurrection or, in the case of Lazarus, resuscitation? If "something" (the soul?) survived and was nominally conscious, why would Jesus, even in his deep grief

for the family, call Lazarus back to physical existence? And, why would Lazarus not testify to the grand existence of this state, adding in Tennyson's words "praise to praise"? If, on the other hand, "something" did not survive, the story is easier to bear at least philosophically and perhaps theologically.

The significance of the Lazarus story

The *obscurity* of the biblical text noted in the title has nothing to do with the significance of the Lazarus account. Indeed, the narrative in John 11 addresses ultimate issues; it churns from beginning to end with the conflict between life and death.[1] It opens with Lazarus' illness, moves to his death, and culminates in his return to life, leaving us to muse about what he experienced (or did not experience) during his four-day period of death.

There are unmistakable death-resurrection parallels between Lazarus and Jesus. Jesus had angered Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem by dropping hints about his Messianic identity, referencing his Father, his sheep, and eternal life (10:14-18). He candidly refers to his impending death and resurrection:

I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again (John 10:17b-18).

His claim that, "I and the Father are one" (10:30) is particularly infuriating and leads to charges of blasphemy (10:33). When the religious leaders attempt to stone Jesus, he temporarily escaped by moving back across the Jordan River to the site where John had baptized in the early days of his ministry (10:40). There Jesus learns about Lazarus' illness, but stays put for two more days before startling his disciples with his disturbing travel plans: "Let us go back to Judea" (11:7).

Bethany in Judea, the hometown of Lazarus and now renamed in his honor Azariyeh, or Lazariyeh, is located on the eastern slope of Mt. Olivet, about two miles from Jerusalem (11:18). Its close proximity results in angst among the disciples who likely fear for their own lives should they accompany Jesus on a return visit (11:8). When Jesus begins the journey back to Bethany, he knows that Lazarus is dead (11:11, 14). Initially, he describes Lazarus as having "fallen asleep" (11:11). The disciples prescribe that Jesus let Lazarus sleep in hopes of getting better. Finally, Jesus pronounces, "Lazarus is dead" (11:14).

[1] Marianne Meye Thompson, "The Raising of Lazarus in John 11: A Theological Reading," in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*, Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 236.

Persuaded of coming demise, Thomas declares, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (11:16). Thomas appears to sense that, while Jesus' journey to Bethany may indeed bring life to Lazarus, it will likely lead to Jesus' death and the corresponding death of his disciples. Once Lazarus is raised, there will be no turning back for either Jesus or the disciples. Indeed, the raising of Lazarus serves as the catalyst for the Sanhedrin's formulation of an "official plot"[2] to take Jesus' life (11:45-53).

What the text discloses about the death of Lazarus

When Jesus arrives in Bethany, he finds a grieving family being attended by a number of comforters identified as "many Jews"[3] (11:18). Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days (11:17). This temporal notation is important since in Jewish thought, the spirit of the deceased person was thought to hover over or near the body for three days awaiting an opportunity to reenter it. Once the discoloration of the skin brought on by decomposition set in, death was "irreversible"[4] and the spirit was effectively "locked out."[5]

Jesus encounters this permanent and irreversible situation; Lazarus was indeed dead as Jesus had previously declared to his disciples. Indeed, four days in a tomb would result in an appalling stench (11:39b). As Jesus approaches the tomb, Martha, identified here as "the sister of the dead man" (11:39a) is on scene. She is shocked when Jesus orders the removal of the stone laying across the entrance to the tomb[6] and attempts to take charge by informing Jesus of the time lapse, presumably for practical or hygienic reasons related to the odor.[7] Jesus gently reminds her that doing God's work is his business, believing is hers. The mission proceeds as "they took away the stone" (11:41a) with Jesus back in charge.

Jesus then prays. His prayer focuses on God as "Father" (11:41) and assumes that Jesus knew the Father's will concerning Lazarus. All he must do is express his thanks for

[2] Gerald L. Borchert, "John 1-11," *The New American Commentary*, vol. 25a, E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 346. Borchert argues that the Lazarus story is the pivotal point in the Johannine tradition in contrast to the Synoptic portrayal of the cleansing or rededication of the Temple (Matt 21:12–17, 21:23–27; Mark 11:15–19, 11:27–33; Luke 19:45–48, 20:1–8). See also Thompson, 237, who notes that "what brings death to Jesus brings life to the world."

[3] Some of these Jews will play a critical role near the end of the story as they report to the Pharisees what Jesus had done (11:46). Their tales trigger a meeting between the chief priests and the Pharisees and the Sanhedrin (11:47) resulting in a concentrated effort to eliminate Jesus. See Sandra M. Schneiders, "Death in the Community of Eternal Life: History, Theology, and Spirituality in John 11," *Interpretation* 41:1 (Jan 1987), 45.

[4] D. A. Carson, "The Gospel According to John," *Pillar Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 411.

[5] Borchert, 354.

[6] Schneiders, 54, explains that Martha simply did not anticipate that Jesus would resuscitate Lazarus. Her hesitation is not caused by lack of faith. Instead, Martha believes that Lazarus, even though he has died, lives; thus, she has no reason to think in terms of resurrection in his case.

[7] Carson, 417.

being heard. Indeed, "the Son may ask; the Father grants."[8] Thus, Jesus' prayer is not for the benefit of Lazarus, but for those who will witness this miracle of miracles in hopes of bringing those who observe it into the band of believers.[9]

After praying, Jesus "called in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!'" (11:43).[10] Lazarus is, ironically, one of "the dead [who] will hear the voice of the Son of God" (5:25) and, having heard, he comes to life.

When Jesus speaks, Lazarus comes out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face in the customary Jewish funerary apparel of the day. Lazarus struggles with his grave wrappings, likely hopping and shuffling,[11] until Jesus issues one final order: "Take off the grave clothes and let him go" (11:44b). With that, the account of the miracle of miracles ends.[12] But, the questions remain.

What the text does *not* disclose about the raising of Lazarus

The *obscurity* of the biblical text noted in the title focuses thus on what the text does *not* disclose about the raising of Lazarus during and following the four days he lay dead. Much has been made of the mystery; but, as noted above, Johannine commentators are more interested and rightly so in the christological character of Jesus' activity. The raising of Lazarus therefore is for "the manifestation of Jesus' glory" so that his disciples will believe and others may follow.[13]

A number of questions come to mind, but the most significant one remains: Why did Lazarus not tell his family about his experience of being "dead" and returning? Additional questions include: What did he see? What did he feel? Was anything there tangible? Could he have refused to respond to Jesus' bidding? Did any family members dare ask for explanation? Did the evangelist hear anything about Lazarus? Why did he not record it? Was Lazarus the "talk of the town" wherever he went? What about his presence at the dinner given at Bethany in Jesus' honor (12:1-2)? Did anyone ask him how it felt to be an "exquisite corpse"?[14]

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[8] Ibid., 418.

[9] Borchert, 362; see also Carson, 418.

[10] Carson, 418, reminds us of the anecdotal and anonymous comment that had Jesus not specified Lazarus, "all of the tombs would have given up their dead to resurrection life."

[11] Ibid., 419.

[12] The actual ending of the Lazarus story is not as easily defined. See Wilhelm Wuellner, "Putting Life Back Into the Lazarus Story and Its Reading: The Narrative Rhetoric of John 11 as the Narration of Faith," *Semeia* 53 (1991): 116; and Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*, 212f.

[13] Schneiders, 50. Thompson, 242, disagrees arguing, "it is not faith that guarantees life, but God."

[14] This is the designation given to Lazarus by Scott Dalgarno, in "Exquisite Corpse," *America* (Mar 2005): 30. Dalgarno writes:

> *Four days dead and sipping soup, Lazarus*
> *Sits up, grunts, asks, "What's today?" He reeks*

No, the gospel writer does not mention what Lazarus experienced in the tomb nor how he may have described being brought back from the dead. Persons who have had NDEs (near-death experiences) report feelings of reluctance at being returned to bodily existence. It may be that some of these people did not actually die.[15] Clearly, this is not the case with Lazarus of Bethany. Dead four days, he lives again. What are we to make of his silence?

Jesus' final command muddies the situation even more. "Take off the grave clothes and let him go" (11:44). Where does Jesus suppose Lazarus will go? Will he go home? Will he be content to live at home again with his sisters Mary and Martha? Would they constantly gaze at him, wondering what it was like to be him? How likely is it that he could make the transition from *everyday life* to *eternal life* only to settle for *everyday life* again?[16] Does it even cross Lazarus' mind that he will have to "die" again someday? The silence is not only deafening, it is downright frustrating.

Over a century ago, Herbert Mortimer Luckock expressed his own frustration with Lazarus' apparent failure to communicate:

We have often imagined ourselves standing by that opening grave, and have listened with an interest ever fresh to the voice which bade the dead come forth; and as we have read the sacred record we have closed the Book with a sigh of regret that not a word, not a syllable was spoken by the risen dead; that although, as tradition tells us, he lived in that his second earthly life for thirty years, there is no recorded utterance, no related experience of the other world. Do we doubt whether he was asked for the revelation? We fancy that we can see his neighbours and friends trying by every device to extract from him the awful secret, appealing to him with almost passionate entreaty, but to all alike he turns the same unwavering look—the face that, awed by the visions of the past, was never seen to smile again—the silence never broken, the secret never revealed.[17]

The text's (lack of?) significance for the intermediate state

The frustrating silences in the Lazarus story may, however, offer clues to the nature of the intermediate state provided one is willing to speculate. We do so, however, with warnings ringing in our ears. Calvin contends that it is "neither lawful nor expedient to inquire too curiously concerning our souls' intermediate state. Many torment themselves

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Of tomb, but no one blanches at this banquet.
Sister Martha feeds him, wipes his chin, reminding him
Of time and mass and the unforgiving weight of resuscitation.

[15] John McIndoe, "Lazarus, His Friend," *Expository Times* 116:5 (Feb 2005): 164. For an experience of an NDE by a Christian chaplain, see Suzanne Guthrie, "Living by the Word," *Christian Century* (March 2005): 22; and Terence Nichols, *Death and Afterlife: A Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2010), 91-112.

[16] Guthrie, 22.

[17] Herbert Mortimer Luckock, *The Intermediate State Between Death and Judgment*, 3rd ed, (New York: Thomas Whittaker Bible House, 1891), 5-6.

overmuch with disputing as to what place the souls occupy and whether or not they already enjoy heavenly glory."[18]

Calvin's caution pinpoints a crucial theological/philosophical flashpoint: namely, an anthropological dualism that emerges in conversations about the intermediate state. Theologians, however, do not have the final say in the matter. There is substantial philosophical debate about the nature of life beyond the grave. In particular, "the nature of life beyond the grave depends on the nature of the human person whose life it will be."[19] The two most common approaches to the nature of human persons, and their relationship with their physical bodies, are *materialism* and *dualism.*

Materialism (or monism) is the view that the person is identical with the physical body (or a part of the physical body), while *dualism* is the view that there is more to the person than just the physical body, in particular, an immaterial soul is an essential part of the person.[20]

Dualism posits that persons are composed of both body and soul. Although there are a number of dualist views,[21] one argument which is compatible with both dualism and certain accounts of materialism runs as follows:[22]

1. I am essentially a psychological being.
2. My body is not essentially a psychological being.
3. A single thing cannot both be and not be an essentially psychological being.
4. Therefore, I am not identical with my body.

The persistence question—the question of what personal identity over time consists of—is theologically, philosophically, and literally a question of life and death. Answers to the question determine, to the extent possible, the conditions under which *persons* survive or cease to exist in the course of certain voyages including those like the one presumably taken by the person of Lazarus.[23]

From a simple dualist perspective then, Lazarus, an essentially psychological being, becomes upon death a disembodied soul or person and continues to exist in some form or

[18] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. 20, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 2:997. The quote appears in a section in which Calvin discloses the dualistic principle which guides his thinking on the resurrection. It is entitled: "Resurrection of the flesh but immortality of the soul!"

[19] Kevin Timpe, "Introduction to Part 5," in *Arguing About Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 431.

[20] Kevin J. Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature: A Christian Materialist Alternative to the Soul* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 14.

[21] Corcoran identifies four dualist views: Plato's substance dualism, Descarte's substance dualism, Aquinas' compound dualism, and Hasker's emergent dualism. Ibid., 23-45.

[22] Ibid., 34.

[23] Carsten Korfmacher, "Personal Identity," in *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, eds. James Fieser, and Bradley Dowden, http://www.iep.utm.edu/, 26 February 2012.

fashion. In this disembodied state, "Lazarus" as person is not identical with his decomposing body in the tomb for four days. When Jesus calls him back to life, he becomes a re-embodied soul or person.

Theological body-soul dualists belong to a camp populated by "those with lenses ground in Athens."[24] Dualists argue that the soul cannot cease to exist (and thus is not a component of the physical world) but upon the death of the body, it separates into "bodiless bliss" or, that there is a resurrection upon death in which the physical body is exchanged for a spiritual body which is already being formed within the person.[25]

An anthropological dualism is at the root of the many troubling questions in the Lazarus account, not the least of which is why the loving Jesus would recall his friend to earth. Was it unfair—perhaps even unethical—to do so? The question here does not refer to the metaphysics of resurrection (or in Lazarus' case, resuscitation), but to the propriety of Jesus in performing what appears to be a cruel miracle for his friend. And, why did this re-embodied soul (person) named Lazarus not tell of the glories he presumably experienced?

While dualism is consistent with belief in life after death, it fails to account for the central role of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body. The ecumenical creeds of the Church contain no confessions of belief in a doctrine of "soul survival." Rather, the orthodox Christian doctrine of the afterlife typically but not always focuses on the doctrine of bodily resurrection.[26] The Nicene Creed affirms: "And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come." The Westminster Confession of 1646, on the other hand, incorporates an anthropological dualism in their Confession and, in so doing, the authors "enshrined in protestant orthodoxy a dualist anthropology as well as the intermediate state":[27]

The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption: but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them: the souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens where they behold the face of God, in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies.

Materialism or anthropological monism posits that a person's body is necessary for its own existence. Kevin Corcoran observes that the materialist then is on the spot "to tell

[24] E. Earle Ellis, "*Sōma* in First Corinthians," *Int* 44:2 (April 1990): 143. Ellis asserts that body-soul dualists are "numerous in Christian tradition."

[25] Ibid. Ellis argues that dualistic body-soul interpretations "came to dominance apparently with the synthesis of Christianity and Greek philosophy by Clement and Origen." Eusebius, *Hist Eccl*, 6 37, documents the transition: "And at that time also a synod of considerable size assembled, and Origen, being again invited thither, spoke publicly on the question with such effect that the opinions of those who had formerly fallen were changed."

[26] Kevin J. Corcoran, "Dualism, Materialism, and the Problem of Postmortem Survival," in Timpe, *Arguing About Religion,* 439.

[27] Brian Edgar, "Biblical Anthropology and the Intermediate State," *EQ* 74:1 (Jan 2002): 28.

about how a body that peters out and ceases to exist can somehow turn up in the New Jerusalem."[28] The problem arises because materialism requires numerical identity. For example, if Ruby who existed but died in 1979 exists in the hereafter, then a physical object numerically identical with Ruby's body must also exist in the hereafter.[29]

Materialism involves a "fundamentally holistic view of the person in which there are various aspects or dimensions of life, such as body, soul and spirit, which are *not separable* into independently existing entities."[30] Human existence, for example the life of one Lazarus of Bethany, is *constituted* in the unity of these aspects or dimensions and therefore the notion of the person as a *disembodied soul* is not plausible.[31]

The verb "constituted" in the previous paragraph points to what Lynn Baker calls the Constitution View (CV) of human persons.[32] According to the CV, human persons are "constituted by [their] bodies without being identical with the bodies that constitute [them]."[33] The CV defines the person as more than mere physical existence, more than being identical with the biological organism that is the body. Rather, to be a person requires a "first-person perspective."[34] A first-person perspective means that "one can think about oneself as oneself and think about one's thoughts as one's own."[35] It is the ability I (first-person) have to think of myself as myself and not as Ben Craver (third person). When I (first-person) wonder whether or not this paper will turn out to be a quality work, I am thinking from a first-person perspective.[36]

Corcoran explains:

. . . not only are human persons *essentially* bodily beings, insofar as they are now constituted by biological bodies, but human persons are *essentially* constituted by the biological bodies that do in fact constitute them. Therefore, if my body should ever cease to exist, I would cease to exist.[37]

[28] Corcoran, "Dualism, Materialism, and the Problem of Postmortem Survival," 437.

[29] The example is patterned from a similar one found in Kevin Corcoran, "Physical Persons and Postmortem Survival without Temporal Gaps," in *Soul, Body, and Survival: Essays on the Metaphysics of Human Persons*, Kevin Corcoran, ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 202.

[30] Edgar, 27. Emphasis mine.

[31] Ibid. Emphasis mine.

[32] Lynn Baker, "Materialism with a Human Face," in *Soul, Body, and Survival*, 160. See also, Baker, *Persons and Bodies* (New York: Cambridge Press, 2000), especially, chapter 3.

[33] Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature*, 65-66.

[34] Baker, "Materialism," 160; Baker terms this "the defining characteristic of all persons."

[35] Ibid., 160-61.

[36] The personal example owes to similar examples in Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature*, 68.

[37] Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature*, 68-69. Corcoran clarifies a "special meaning" for the terms "essential" and its cognates: "if a substance has a property essentially, then that substance cannot exist and fail to have that property."

Nancey Murphy follows a similar line of thinking as she addresses the issue of personal identity. Murphy calls her view a "nonreductive physicalist account."[38] Regarding personal identity, she raises a crucial question: "what are the criteria by which I am the same person now as I was forty years ago, even though qualitatively I am quite different?" For Murphy, the body as a material object does not constitute personal identity. Rather, it is the "higher capacities" that possessing a material body enables that constitute identity.[39]

"What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?"[40] Tertullian's question is a reminder of the tension between theology and philosophy. Yet, if we are to make "progress" on answering Lucille's question, philosophy may provide a framework for an answer.

Corcoran raises the "essential" issue: "Therefore, if my *body* should ever cease to exist, I would cease to exist."[41] What does it mean then to read Jesus' plain statement: "Lazarus is dead"? (John 11:14). What did he (and might we) experience upon death? John Cooper identifies three possibilities:[42]

1. Persons continue to exist after death through immediate resurrection.
2. Persons continue to exist after death through a disembodied state awaiting future resurrection.
3. Persons cease to exist but are resurrected at the general resurrection.

Corcoran adds a fourth possibility: "an intermediate state of *bodily* existence where the body is not yet glorified because it has not yet participated in the resurrection."[43] Once again, the parallels between Jesus and Lazarus are intriguing. For how could Jesus and Lazarus enjoy intermediate-though-not-yet-glorified bodies during the time when both bodies were lying in their respective tombs? Further, how, in Corcoran's proposal, could either Jesus or Lazarus participate in "an intermediate state of bodily existence" if, as Corcoran stated earlier, the cessation of his body would also mean "I would cease to exist"?

Corcoran makes his case from two perspectives. First, the NT writers were in the business of presenting the gospel, not in nuancing philosophical distinctions between a body and a corpse.[44] Second, it is important to describe what a body is and what it takes for a *body* to persist through time. For Corcoran, human bodies resemble storms and, in particular, tornadoes:

[38] Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* Current Issues in Theology (Cambridge: University Press, 2006), 132.

[39] Ibid., 132. The "higher capacities" include: consciousness and memory, moral character, interpersonal relations, and, especially, relationship with God."

[40] Tertullian, *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* 7.9.

[41] Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature*, 69. Emphasis mine.

[42] John Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 104-108.

[43] Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature*, 143-44.

[44] Ibid., 142. For Corcoran, it is "a mistake to identify a body with a corpse" and it is "also a mistake to identify a person with a body or an organism."

A tornado, for example, picks up new stuff and throws off old stuff as it moves through space. Human bodies are like that. They are storms of atoms moving through space and time. They take on new stuff . . . and throw off old stuff as they go. . . . A body persists in virtue of the fact that the atoms that are caught up in a life-preserving (causal) relation at one time pass on that life-preserving causal relation to successive swarms of atoms.[45]

The persistence conditions of *persons* relate to the persistence conditions of the physical organism. Essential to both is an immanent causal relation/connection:

A human body B that exists in the future is the same as a human body A that exists now if the temporal states leading up to B are immanent causally connected to the temporal state of A now.[46]

Further, it is not only possible but plausible that immanent causal relations do indeed cross temporal gaps. The rationale has both biblical and experiential grounds. Biblically, Scripture claims that God will ultimately bring about the general resurrection. Human experience, on the other hand, teaches that bodies cease to exist. If, as materialists insist, the future resurrection body must be numerically the same body as the one that existed then ceased to exist, then the notion of persistence described above demands that "the last state of the pre-gap body and the first state of the post-gap body must stand in immanent causal relations to each other." Thus, immanent causal connections (or relations) can cross the temporal gap.[47]

Answering Lucille's Question

How do these admittedly complex philosophical formulations affect Lazarus' return to life? More to the point, did we uncover an answer to Lucille Thomas' question? When Lazarus' dead body was placed in the tomb, something indeed survived, but it was not the immaterial "soul" as proposed in most dualist anthropologies. Rather, an immanent causal relation means that Lazarus' body crosses, as it were, a temporal gap entering into an intermediate state of bodily existence. What that existence consists of is simply unknowable. But, somehow, "the atoms that compose the pre-gap body can pass on a life-preserving causal relation across the gap to the atoms that compose the post-gap body."[48] Only God knows how and only God is capable of bringing it to pass.

Where was Lazarus for the four days he was in the tomb? If I had to answer Lucille today, I would be forced to admit, "I haven't a clue!" A biblical problem that relies on philosophical speculation for an answer may never be truly answered. As for my own

[45] Ibid., 72.
[46] Ibid., 128.
[47] Ibid., 130.
[48] Ibid., 130-31. Corcoran, *Dualism, Materialism, and the Problem of Postmortem Survival*, 444, concedes that the challenge for any Christian who embraces this position (dualist or materialist), is to attempt to understand how that might work.

question, the ethical propriety of Jesus in raising Lazarus, the answer is even more opaque. If indeed "Lazarus" was in some intermediate state of existence, resuscitating him seems unfair. We also remember Paul's hopeful desire "to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far . . ." (Phil 1:23). Some intermediate condition is apparently better that life on earth. Why bring Lazarus back?

John Newport notes that the NT is not so much concerned with a state of existence presumably including a kind of surviving entity (a body?) as it is with the continuing relationship one has with Christ through and beyond death.[49] The words of a humble Otto Weber demand recognition of our earth-bound situation and somewhat laughable human deficiencies: ". . . our conceptual tools are not adequate for the task of uniting to each other the hereafter of the Kingdom and the Now which is the lot of the dead."[50]

Biographical Note

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[50] Otto Weber, *Foundations of Dogmatics* (trans. Darrell L. Guder; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 2:688.

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On the Organization of Life

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In the beginning these was only the Father, because he is logically prior to everything else. He exists by virtue of his own being. His nature is To Live, as Aquinas taught, and nothing else is necessary. He uniquely is the reason why there is something rather than nothing, and that fact – that he is the bedrock of existence – is His specific nature. All being and all time are present to Him because they are extensions of Him.

His life expands outward because that is the nature of life: to be dynamic and growing. The first consequence of his life is the Son, who is alive with His life. So the Son is also true life and filled with life. Father and Son share in the divine life, and both are God fully and seamlessly. But He also has His specific nature, which is to be human, which is to say to be born from the Father. That is to say, the Son uniquely "came to be," although not in time. He is not the Father's life, He is the unique expression of the Father's life because He was begotten by the Father. He also is God, and He is life, He is unchanging but He comprehends change and growth by virtue of His human nature. The *human* is the "begotten one."

The Son has fulfilled his commission from the Father, which is to form a cosmos as His companion. It is an essentially human cosmos, a cosmos of everything that He has begotten: a cosmos of stars and laws and crawling things which He the Son has begotten in His image, a cosmos that expresses the being of the Father. Thus He fulfills His nature, which is to make real and tangible the gift of existence.

This cosmos is *other*, external to Father and Son; created by the Son in fulfillment of his office to expand the life of God. But it is inseparable from God because it also exists and is real. This tie is embodied in God also, by virtue of His Holy Spirit, whose specific nature is to be the Revelation of Father and Son to the cosmos. He is uniquely God *in* the world and God *for* the world. He is the Revelation of God to His world.

These three specific natures – God the principle of Existence, God the human god, the Begotten god, and God the Revelation to all that exists in consequence of his nature – are deemed the triune God: three persons in one divine nature *To Live*. It is because He is God in the World – the Revelation of God to His world – that the Son said of Him that He does not reveal what He knows on His own account, but only reveals to the world what He has learned from the Father and the Son. When in the fullness of time the Son came to His world – the work of His hands – it was through His Holy Spirit that he came into the world. The Spirit serves Him by revealing Him to His world. These three are all the persons in God because they complete everything that is needed of God. It was necessary for him to create because He is Life, and therefore it was necessary for Him to Beget the Son, but Father and Son are separate and different in essence: Father *qua* father and Son *qua* son. They are pure spirit, and as Aquinas teaches can be different only by virtue of distinct essential traits. The one who begets and the one who is begotten are essentially different by virtue of that event. God cannot beget Himself because He too is subject to the laws of reason. He too must be parsed into prior and posterior: Father and Son. It is not any sort of limitation of God

to be governed by the laws of logic, because it is His glory to make Reason real. I emphasize again however that this logical ordering is not a temporal ordering.

The reality of God and Cosmos therefore necessitates the reality of the Trinity. The Father, being the source of life and therefore of existence, creates a necessary consequence of his nature. The Son is the first expression of his life, and is necessary because life Creates. But creation cannot stop with the Son, because by their partnership they make necessary an objective Cosmos external to themselves. But this Cosmos is real and imbued with their life, and for that reason it cannot be divorced from them. They are expressed in their cosmos, and that expression has his own reality that in them.

It is not a familiar idea that the three persons of the Trinity are different essentially. They are equally God, and equally Life. There is no essential difference there. But as we know, they are pure spirit, and pure spirits must have essential differences. The Father is God, *qua* God, and Father *qua* Father. The Son is God *qua* God but Son *qua* Begotten, and the Spirit is God *qua* God and Revelation *qua* Holy Spirit. Since the Trinity is a complete cosmos in itself, not needing any other thing to exist, the persons can only be defined by the relationship to each other, within the Trinity.

The Son existed from the beginning, but only because of the Father. The Holy Spirit also existed not in time, but by virtue of the fact that the cosmos too is external to Father and Son. Since God is the source of all, He must be revealed in all. From the moment then that the cosmos became possible – even before it specific shape was defined but from the moment it became possible – its relationship to God became real, and in that event God was revealed to it.

Creation

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The Son who was begotten fulfills His commission to create a cosmos, and so He is credited as the architect of the world. The world exists by consequence of the Father's being, which is to be the reason there is something and not only nothing, but it is begotten by the Son. He fashioned the world in His own image and likeness. We do not comprehend all that that fact imports because we are only creatures of this world, but we know that we are not only finite things. We are expressions of His nature, to be begotten. We know also that we share in his gifts of mind and will, able to experience what is infinite and timeless. This gift is most specifically the sense in which He fashioned us in His image and likeness. He made us to rule over the world. This gift was not enough for Him however, because he is not only a being of concepts and abstractions. He revels in reality. So he fashioned us also to look like him, with arms and hands and eyes.

The scribes who gave us our earliest scriptures testify to this, for they write that He fashioned us in His image and likeness. Those men reported what they knew, but not what they understood. They did not appreciate the extent of our nature. They did understand the known facts of the history of creation, and foremost among that was that God had visited His world. He visited Adam and Eve and spoke with them in the garden. He visited Abraham on the road to Sodom and Gomorrah. He looks like us! He too was begotten, and therefore he was begotten as Someone. Of course, it is we who look like Him. Our eyes reveal to us truths of our nature that even three millenia later we will not understand, but as the proverb

states: “Nothing enters the mind until it has first been recognized by the senses.” In time the fullness of our nature is revealed to us, and so we grow beyond that initial revelation posited in the flesh, but what has been learned cannot be unlearned: Now we see more, our gift of mind and will, but never less.

Man and Woman

So this is the population of existence from the beginning: three divine persons sharing the nature of God – To Live – but further differentiated essentially as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the cosmos of creation the follows from them. The nature of everything is not a simply attribute in isolation. Rather, as Aristotle taught in the Categories, it is a hierarchy of essential traits. For each general trait follow many more specific traits that are also essential to the being. We speak then of God *qua* God, and of Son *qua* Son without confusion.

It is the nature of man, *qua* human, to be begotten also, but our begetting is fundamentally different from His. He was begotten of God before all time, but we were begotten in the world and in time. He comprehends growth and development. Indeed growth and expansion are essential byproducts of the divine nature and are direct consequences of Him. It is because of that nature that we are. But we are creatures of growth and change in a different way. It is our nature to need to grow and change: to validate in our lives the divine call to grow and mature. It is for this that we were begotten: that we would grow up in Him.

Because we were begotten in this world however we have another, worldly nature: we are animal as well as human. Human and animal are joined seamlessly in us, as divine and human are joined in him. We know that while He has these two natures, He is a single person, man and God. So while we have two natures, we are also unified persons, man and animal. For us it is in part a limitation: nothing can arise before the mind until it first comes through the senses. Aristotle, in his treatise called *De Anima* (“Concerning the Soul”) explains that we have a faculty that merges what the senses detect in our surroundings and that transmits it to the mind for interpretation and understanding, and to the will for decision and action. This faculty, because it draws from all the senses, he called “Common Sense.” It is the meeting ground of the senses. As such, it is capable of functioning like the mind and will themselves, though only for low-level tasks. In place of wisdom and knowledge, it has instinct and habit. It is in the truest sense the repository of our animal nature, because it distills the very highest faculties that the animals are capable of. It serves the mind not only by facilitating many functions that can be performed routinely, but by making available to us the capacity to train ourselves to perform routine tasks without making demands on our mind and will. It does not rule us, because we always retain the ability to intervene and to overrule habitual responses, but it is indicative of our animal nature that we need this common sense to economize on the demands on our minds and wills. We would simply be incapable of functioning in the world if every little detail of life required extensive thought and reasoning; that is to say, it we could never simply replace them with habit. We think, but we think slowly. We think *in time*, and our thought draws on our resources of intellect and reason. We think slowly; too slowly to survive if we had to think about everything. While we

are limited by our finite human nature fashioned in time, so also are we beneficiaries of that highest gift of the animals: common sense.

But our common humanity does not entirely define us either, because we are man and woman as well. If the essence of our humanity is that we are begotten in this world of finite time, what is our essence *qua* man and *qua* woman? The essence of woman is to trust. The essence of man is to be trustworthy. These natures are both radically complementary and radically different. They are not simply alternatives. They are in a way different *kind*s of being.

The trusting nature of woman would seem to be all that is necessary for human beings. In the first and highest of all the commandments, Jesus called us to love and trust him, for it is loving trust that he credits as "faith." No one does his will unless and until he loves and trusts the Lord our God. This is a uniquely feminine commission. No one does His will until he fulfills the call to all women to trust. That is why it is necessary for all men and women to be begotten of woman, of mother. Everyone shares in this feminine call to trust, and learns it from his or her mother. In this, the pairing of Mother and Son – of Jesus and Virgin Mary – foreshadows our life in the world. Even Jesus, in coming to his creatures, ordained that He would also take upon himself the call to complete trust. The nature of God is unequivocally masculine, because God does not have to trust anyone or anything else. Far from it; He has to live out His commitment to be trustworthy. But He ordained that in order to shatter the separation between His nature and our natures, He would learn trust, and learn it from the only source available: His mother. He has a father, and could not have another, competing father in this world, so it was necessary that he have no earthly father. There is nothing that he needs to learn about his masculine nature, because he is the source of it. He needed – we could not say so of our own reason but by reflecting on the way that he did in fact choose to live – to learn trust.

Now He had a very significant thing to say about trust. At the very beginning of the scriptures he said of Adam that it was not good for him to live alone, but that he needed a consort. This signifies that while woman is potentially complete – which is to say "completed" – in Jesus, man is not complete. Man is incomplete unless and until he has someone to trust him. This raises a rather fascinating question: why did Jesus fashion men at all? As God, he could simply fashion women and arrange for them to live in his harem, doing his work and trusting in his Providence. He is the only man that women need, or so one would think. No Pasha could have it better. As men, while we do not personally encourage such a way of life that does away with us, we can certainly appreciate the compelling advantages of it in the abstract. So what are we missing here?

Why did he fashion Man? He fashioned men to be like himself in a unique way: to desire to earn the trust of Him and of other men and women. Women too he fashioned not in the harem, but in the world. He made them to need to trust the men. If there is any dangerous weakness that women, as a group, display it is an excessive eagerness to trust men. The headlines are filled with unhappy endings to stories that started with misplaced trust. So when I say that women "need" to trust men, that is not simply a practical judgement. It is the conclusion drawn from observing how women actually live, no matter in what sense that life is necessary for them. But it pleased the Lord God, whose being fills the cosmos, that His specific nature – to be Trustworthy – should populate His creation. In the

beginning, it was not enough for Him to Exist, it was necessary for Him to grow and to be realized in everything that exists.

In reference to us, mere mortal men and women, the consequence of this divine nature is achieved in its breathtaking logic. He fashioned man and woman: man to become his brother by adoption and woman to become his sister by adoption. It was by the simple act of fashioning men that He provided that we, both men and women, could not only serve him in His city, but could become His brothers and sisters. It is as men that we are uniquely called to brotherhood with him. Jesus described that very graphically in terms of a feast to which we are all called to partake not as servers and lackeys, but as His guests and heirs of the kingdom. Women in particular live in a kind of an ambiguous suspension caught between man the spouse and man the son. As sons work out their calling to be trustworthy they must leave the nest of boyhood and take on the responsibilities of life. As men they fulfill their destiny, but it remains true that it is as sons that the relationship of man and woman is defined.

The World around Us

The functions of mind are supplemented by the common sense. This forms a partnership within us that adapts up to live in the finite world: the world of sense and experience and physical action, to name just a few of its talents. It is intensely physical and finite. It is no less part of us, and it is our nature to live in this kind of world of “near and far,” of “now and then,” of past, present, and future, and of cause and effect.

There is another kind of talent that we have which supplements the will just as the common sense supplements the mind. It is the talent of emotion, which is a trainable, personal reward mechanism. It is “desire,” alongside our will. Again, it is by itself present in the animals too and is not foreign to them, but it is different in us because it functions jointly with our will. Not always cooperatively of course and in fact the entire field of drama seems to be suspended in mid-air, floating in the gaps between them and in their conflicts.

It is not necessary to us to invoke mind or will. The common sense and the font of desires can, like the animals, impel us through our days. We differ from the world not in that we have mind and will, but in that we are *able to* have mind and will. But He loves us as He constituted us: with mind and common sense, and with will and desire. He is satisfied that we will always be creatures of the world and creatures of past, present, and future. Some of the deepest experiences of our collective life – of our cultural history – represent insights into His desire. Saint Catherine of Siena, patroness saint of Italy, was a ravishing beauty in Renaissance Siena who lived the love of Jesus not only in the abstract, in terms that our worthy priests endeavor to impress on us from the pulpit every Sunday, but personally. He has more than a will to love us, His creations; He desires us. There is nothing about us that is by its nature foreign to him. He loves beauty and the good life. Lest He seem too soft however, it was Him also who voyaged with Columbus, Cortez, and Magellan, joining in their sacrifice to danger and hardship. It is not an easy world though in the present day we can visit every corner of it without ever venturing too far from the nearest hotel. Now as much as ever our adventures are internal to us: adventures of the intellect. He made us for the beauty of our world and the demands of risk.

He has never left this world that He fashioned for himself. He wants a world that loves life.

The Mystery of the Incarnation

The truth of the Incarnation is revealed in one gripping phrase:

"…and the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us…"

From this we sometimes but inaccurately say that the Son "became" man. As a colloquialism that it acceptable, but it cannot be literally true. Jesus is the God-man, the Son. But logically he could not be the God-man until he had become man. So if it was in human history that he became man, it was also within the extent of our time that he became God-man. Since however he *is* the God-man, that would imply that he was begotten within human history: within the creation of which he is the source and the author! Put somewhat more succinctly, if he became man, then he became God-man for that is who he is. But in that case he *became*. But if he became, then he was made and not Begotten. It can only be that it is by virtue of his Begottenness that he is the God-man.

If he did not *become* man, then in what sense did he become, for we know that at the Incarnation he became. He became mortal, or as the beautiful prayer informs us, he became *flesh*. He took on himself our mortality. One may ask: "Isn't our mortality an essential aspect of our humanity, so that the two are in effect synonyms?" No, not so. Mortality is not essential to us. We, it is true, by virtue of Original Sin are destined to die. For that reason, "mortality" and "humanity" are frequently treated as synonyms, but that is misleading in this more precise context: a context that demands greater precision. We know that mortality is not essential to us because quite simply Adam and Eve were fully human – they were fully creatures of this creation – but from their beginning they were immortal. Death came upon them when they rejected the gift of life that they had received from him who is life. Mortality is for us an accident; a denial of our life. For us, life and death are equally gifts from God, and for that reason we are free to choose one or the other. And our choice is not merely a choice of Earthly life and death, for we are all under sentence of death in this world. It is given to us to actually reverse Jesus' own choice: as he chose our mortality we are free to choose his immortality.

In the Incarnation Jesus took on himself all the reality of our animal life. And his mortal body he fashioned from the realities of his divine Father and his earthly Mother. It is indeed a mystery for us to ponder that he, who lives from before the dawn of time, anticipated the body of his mother, a woman born in time. The design of her body is a faculty of her soul: her spiritual body. But in this day we are inclined to identify the function of the spiritual body with the material reality of the genetic endowment. We know they are not the same. First of all, the genetic endowment is susceptible to all sorts of flaws and disfigurements which are not part of the spiritual body, and moreover the genetic substance is corruptible and mortal by its nature. The flesh is essentially mortal. Only the spirit is capable of immortality. So our genetic endowment is not "us." It is an essential part of us nonetheless, and for that reason we affirm that Jesus carried within himself the genetic

contribution of his mother. For the same reason he carried within himself the genetic contribution of his father. This endowment slept, as it were, within the Son until the moment of his incarnation.

As with his divinity and his humanity, they were fused seamlessly with his earthly nature, the nature destined for him from the moment he was begotten, so that there are no parts or seams or compromises of any kind in him. Even his mortal nature was never in any way alien to him. This is the doctrine of the *hypostatic union*.

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Meta-Racism: Religion and the Racist Right

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Abstract

Meta-racism has unique origins beginning with the British Israelite movement in 1840. We use the term meta-racism to refer to a pseudo-racial ideology comprised of three distinct, yet inter-related movements. The first is Christian Identity with roots in early American white supremacist discourse from the 19th and early 20th centuries. The second is the eugenics movement which began in mid-Victorian England with the work of Sir Francis Galton. The third movement, white cultural nationalism, is still evolving and has ideological groundings in identity construction for contemporary neo-Nazi, Ku Klux Klan, and other extremist groups. Convergence of the three movements over time has resulted in a complex belief system for people who are connected to racist right fringe movements.

Introduction

Meta-racism is a religious ideology with roots in Hitler's positive Christianity religious system that was popularized by Joseph Goebbels and Heinrich Himmler during the Third Reich (Vierick 1941). We argue that three essential elements with direct links to Nazi ideology contribute to a dynamic movement that promotes isolationist, apocalyptic, and conspiratorial thinking among a variety of contemporary extremist groups in the United States. The first of the three elements is Christian Identity with roots in early white supremacist discourse emerging in nineteenth and early twentieth century America. The second element is the eugenics movement which began in mid-Victorian England with Sir Francis Galton and continues today with the work of Canadian psychologist, J. Philippe Rushton. The third element is represented by white cultural nationalism that is still evolving and growing among contemporary neo-Nazi, Ku Klux Klan, and other extremist groups. The inter-relatedness of these movements results in both variety and complexity. From a theoretical and practical perspective, trying to make sense of ideological formations is a challenge. Christian Identity is not a single unified movement, but rather a confederation of dynamic racist groups that share certain ideological and theological views drawn from the convergence of some common streams which we will discuss in this paper.

Racial ideology is an important development in any culture or nation. The significance of such thinking has been demonstrated in many different ways and settings in America and other regions of the world. For example, white Anglo-Saxons migrating to the American colonies developed a racial idea of American Indian tribes that judged them as inferior, violent, and savage. This same colonizing group from northern Europe came to judge Africans who were brought to America in the same fashion, labeling them as inferior, weak, and degenerate. These labels were used to justify enslavement of generations of African Americans. As racial formation continued beyond the institution of slavery, the environment was ripe for meta-racism to emerge socially and historically among a segment of the population that continues to believe in white racial superiority.

Christian Identity has roots in the British-Israelite movement that emerged in 1840, growing over time into a multi-faceted religious movement with ties to groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations, and various neo-Nazi organizations such as Blood and Honour.

This paper is an attempt to tease out some of the finer nuances of racial ideology and rhetoric that connects groups that are part of the same extremist movement but whose members may have very different pseudo-religious perspectives. This paper is a brief preliminary theoretical discussion about the continually evolving belief system of the racist right. We begin with a review of extant literature about Christian Identity in the United States. Next we present a discussion about sociohistorical factors and personalities that influence contemporary Christian Identity practitioners and adherents. Finally we conclude with some thoughts about why we think understanding this movement is important for both religious scholars and the broader community.

The American Version of British Israelism

Christian Identity (CI) beliefs have long been debated by religious and other scholars who study extremist activity in contemporary societies such as the United States. Although regarded as an aberration of mainstream Christianity, some scholars argue that CI is the glue that holds the white supremacist movement together (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997; Berlet and Vysotsky 2006). Christian Identity also has the distinction of being the American version of British Israelism, the nineteenth century belief that British people were lineal descendents of the ten lost tribes of Israel (Barkun 1994). Buttressed by the work of Englishman Edward Hine who focused exclusively on the idea that the British were God's only chosen people, the millenarian vision grew and gained popular support in Europe. Eventually Hine came to America in hopes of mobilizing a full-fledged social movement in a country where the Anglo-Saxon core had established itself as the dominant cultural identity for whites of Northern European descent. He found a friend in Charles A. L. Totten, a Professor of Military Science and Tactics at Yale University. Professor Totten was widely known for his prophetic interpretation of biblical scriptures based on mathematical deductions (Barkun 1994: pg. 19).

Totten's apocalyptic vision of the end of the world fit nicely with Hine's millenarian interpretation of the future and the ultimate victory of God's warriors who just happened to be "White Aryans" from Northern Europe. Boston publisher, A. A. Beauchamp, already known for publishing religious tracts, eventually carried on the printed legacy initially introduced by Hine and Totten during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. British Israelism found a home in the Northeast, Midwest, and Western regions of the United States during this time. In California, William Pelley, Gerald L. K. Smith, and Wesley A. Swift formulated Christian Identity theology and put a decidedly American spin on British Israelism (Barkun 1994: pg. 64). Their anti-Semitic views put them at odds with more traditional British Israelists who believed that Jews could gain salvation if they converted to Christianity. They also adhered to the Jewish conspiracy theory which made it impossible for this emerging branch of the movement to co-exist with any doctrine that gave Jews a chance at redemption. Bolstered by resurgence in Protestant fundamentalism, hatred of African Americans, and an ever present millenarian perspective, Christian Identity was born.

Although the Christian Identity movement is not very well organized and it appears to have broken into fragments represented by various and sundry churches and compounds, the ideology is entrenched in the broader white supremacist movement (Dobratz 2001). Most social researchers who study the Christian Identity movement believe it is a fringe movement at best with relatively small numbers of members (Barkun 1994, Dobratz 2001, Ezekiel 2002). Barkun (1994) traced Christian Identity ideology through several time periods along with journalists such as James Ridgeway (1990). Following his research into the Oklahoma City bombing, journalist Joel Dyer (1998) found strands of Christian Identity infiltrating fundamentalist Christian churches in the heartland.

Contemporary Christian Identists continue to search for clues to the meaning of life according to racial formation. Dobratz and Shanks-Meile (1997), Dobratz (2001), and Berlet and Vysotsky (2006) argue that Christian Identity is a branch of the white supremacist movement, while Barkun (1994) considers it to be a movement all its own. Christian Identity is characterized by various factions that are often associated with Klan groups. Christian Identity minister, Pastor Thom Robb, hosts a weekly radio and cable television show and has an active Web site which is associated with his Klan group, the Knights Party. It is difficult to assess how much influence Robb's ministry has on either the broader movement or marginalized rural whites identified by Joel Dyer (1998) in his investigation of anti-government movements following the Oklahoma City bombing. Robb's group does host conferences and other events throughout the year that draw people from different affiliations within the white power movement. He is also beginning to appeal to what he refers to as "historical re-enactors" or Klansmen who refuse to get rid of their robes and hoods and neo-Nazis/skinheads (personal communication April 15, 2011).

True believers, bolstered by Biblical references, suggest that there are so many intractable differences between existing racial groups it is impossible to think that humans descended from one common being (Schamber and Stroud 2000). Sermons given by Christian Identity ministers at Thom Robb's annual Faith and Freedom Conference in April 2011 support this idea. They preached that whites are superior to all other races and for this reason they are the only group that can achieve salvation. According to Ostendorf (2001/2002) if a Christian Identity faction emerges that contains a less caustic message, the movement might potentially extend its influence into America's larger religious institutions.

Christian Identity theologians use Biblical scripture to back up their ideas. Many in their ranks also believe in the apocalyptic vision of the countdown of days (Schamber and Stroud 2000; Sharpe 2000; Dobratz 2001; Ostendorf 2001/2002). Specific doctrinal beliefs that Yahweh is the only true and living God drive Christian Identity dogma. According to Christian Identity adherents, Yahweh is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God is believed to be white, male, and powerful. This idea serves to reinforce fundamentalist ideas about gender and the places that women and men occupy within the family and the broader society (Coltrane and Adams 2008).

Sociohistorical Perspectives: Christian Identity

There are several important links between British-Israelism and Christian Identity. The British-Israelite movement enabled justification for the racial views of contemporary Christian Identity movements. Hine's thesis began with the idea that remnants of the ten lost tribes of Israel migrated to Germany along with some direct descendants of Jesus. Some of the entourage eventually ended up in England. This idea gave birth to the stories in Dan Brown's (2000, 2003) best-selling works—*Devils and Demons* and *The Da Vinci Code*. Another result of this particular movement was the work of Herbert W. Armstrong and the development of the World Wide Church of God.[1] Both Brown's best-selling fiction and Armstrong's successful church movement indicate the influence of British Israelism ideology in contemporary American society that is not directly linked to racist extremist movements.

More radical and extreme than Brown and Armstrong, Christian Identity adherents accept the common idea in British Israelite teaching that white Europeans are direct descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel. Christian Identists believe that whites are God's chosen people and that Jesus was not a Jew but instead, he was descended from the seed of Isaac and Jacob. This blood line eventually became the white, Anglo-Saxon, Germanic people who, according to Christian Identity theology, are the true children of God. They also

[1] For an overview of Armstrong's work, see his Web page at http://hwarmstrong.com/.

believe that modern Jews are neither Israelites nor Hebrews but instead are descendants from the Esau-Edom line that came about when Esau sold his birthright for a serving of lentil stew (Genesis 25:29-34).

The second element framing Christian Identity ideology involves white supremacist racist discourse that has evolved over the past 150 plus years following the founding of the first Klan group in post-Reconstruction Tennessee. This contribution has strong ties to Christian theologians and ministers, particularly in the American South where ministers referenced many of the Old Testament and New Testament passages dealing with slavery to support their view of Africans and other races (particularly the legacy of Ham). Racial inferiority was not confined to the southern states making up the Confederacy. Ideas of racial inferiority were wide-spread and very strong in other parts of the nation. Eventually Jim Crow legitimated segregation in the South and effectively separated whites and the blacks while disenfranchising the black population. At the heart of this movement was the assumption of racial inferiority for blacks, in comparison to white, Anglo-Saxon peoples. These different lines of thinking are merging into meta-racism as Christian Identity continues to morph into a belief system that is gaining acceptability among neo-Nazis and skinheads who historically have been associated primarily with paganistic religions such as Odinism (Dobratz 2001).

An early contributor who is still highly regarded among Christian Identity ministers such as Thom Robb of the Knights Party was Methodist evangelist Gerald L. K. Smith. Smith took the ideas of a world conspiracy promoted by Howard B. Rand and applied them to a vigorous right-wing racist political movement during the 1930s and 1940s. Smith influenced other major figures in the evolving white supremacist movement such as Wesley Swift, founder of the Church of Jesus Christ Christian and Richard Butler, founder of Aryan Nations (both men are deceased). Smith eventually formed the America First Party that promoted anti-Semitism, isolationism, and pro-Nazism during Hitler's Third Reich. According to Jeansonne (1997), Smith was one of the most important of the early American racial purists. His role in creating the "Passion Play" and related commercial activities in Eureka Springs, Arkansas is an example of his ability to promote his version of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ while drawing unsuspecting Christians into the web of his racist ideology.

Another important contributor to the development of meta-racism in the Christian Identity movements is the eugenics movements which stems from the work advanced by Sir Francis Galton in mid-Victorian England. Hitler and the Nazis used eugenic theories to undergird their actions against Jews, homosexuals, and other groups they deemed inferior. Ethnic cleansing became a strong and expanding initiative. The eugenics movement of the 1930s was discounted as an unreliable pseudoscience, yet it drove much of the vicious treatment of racial cleansing that characterized the Nazi movement in Germany. In the latter part of the twentieth century a new eugenics movement emerged that emphasized genetic factors associated with behavior, personality, and physical development.

Prominent racial thinkers such as William Pierce embraced the new eugenics and promoted the idea of "biologic racism" among their constituents (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997). Pierce was the founder of the National Alliance, a neo-Nazi group prominent during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Using the pseudonym, Andrew MacDonald, Pierce was the author of *The Turner Diaries* (1978) and *Hunter* (1989). Timothy McVeigh was in possession of both books which police officers confiscated after the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995. The FBI labeled The Turner Diaries "the Bible of the racist right" (Ball and Dagger 1997). Pierce died in 2001; however, his work still continues to influence many people who are involved in the white supremacist movement in the United States. He also developed his own pseudo-religious perspective he called Cosmotheism which was a combination of

pagan beliefs and 'white' man as superman. Pierce's sermons reveal various ideological underpinnings that can be traced back to British Israelism and Hitler's positive Christianity.

Conclusion

The danger in the growth of movements that embrace Christian Identity theology is referred to as an "evangelical blind spot" in "the racialization of America" by Piper (2011: pp. 76-80). Even though Christian Identity is actually a pseudo-religion, it still contains structural dimensions that power racism among a segment of the white population. This presents the possibility that what we are calling meta-racism is a perfect storm that collides with social and political structures in a state of flux due to unstable global economies, destabilization of world monetary systems, and anomie resulting from cataclysmic philosophies of the racist right. Something similar happened in Nazi Germany when Hitler and his cohorts captured economic systems and unleashed political initiatives which they hoped would solve "the problem of undesirable racial elements" and save the German soul (Vierick 1941: pg. 164). One of the beliefs driving contemporary Christian Identists and their associations is fear of culture genocide for whites, mongrelization of a pure white bloodline through 'race-mixing', and government intervention for undesirable immigrant groups from non-white countries.

It is vitally important that information and interpretation of such movements engage not just the academic community, but broader social and political communities: local, state, national, and international. Comparisons between Christian Identity beliefs and Hitler's positive Christianity are stunning. The dynamics involved in this type of pseudo-religious movement and the need to expose and explain theological underpinnings that ground the broader white supremacist movement are critical to understanding racialist interpretations of the Bible.

Other works such as Peter Godman's (2004) *Hitler and the Vatican: Inside the Secret Archives that Reveal the New Story of the Nazis and the Church* and Edwin Black's (2001) *IBM and the Holocaust: The Strategic Alliance Between Nazi Germany and America's Most Powerful Corporation* expose the compromises and cooperation of major institutions with Hitler and his associates. These studies reveal that racialist movements may become entangled with mainstream businesses, political parties, and even religious institutions. Without an understanding of how racialist ideology develops and insinuates itself into mainstream thought creates the potential for future collaborations between racist movements and social institutions that become unwitting dupes for pseudo-scientific and pseudo-religious ideologies.

A recent example involves the American Conservative Union (ACU) which permitted a known white nationalist, Peter Brimelow, to speak at the Conservative Political Action Committee (CPAC) in Washington, D.C. Brimelow is the founder of VDARE.com, named after Virginia Dare, the first child born to English settlers in America. The event that hosted Brimelow was called "The failure of multiculturalism: How the pursuit of diversity is weakening the American identity." A spokeswoman for the event stated that CPAC has more than 150 sponsors and exhibitors and the panel in question was not organized by the ACU. She went on to say that co-sponsors and affiliated events do not necessarily represent the opinions of the ACU. In the past, skirmishes over the inclusion of gay conservatives at CPAC have been central, but this year's hottest debate was about race. The Southern Poverty Law Center describes Brimelow as a "White Nationalist" and his website as a hate site. Brimelow advocates against immigration and multiculturalism which he has written "risks making America an alien nation." Although Brimelow is not directly linked to Christian Identity, he is an advocate for racial purity which is one of the core beliefs espoused by leaders in the broader white supremacist movement which include eugenicists and racialist activists.

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