



ASSOCIATION FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION

The 2020 Annual Proceedings of the ASSR

Edited by:

Jon K. Loessin

Wharton County Junior College

2019-2020 ASSR Officers:

Jon K. Loessin, Wharton County Junior College, President

Ben Craver, Wayland Baptist University—San Antonio, Vice-President of Meetings and Programs

Todd Jay Leonard, Fukuoka University of Education (Japan), Executive Secretary

J. B. Watson, Stephen F. Austin State University, Vice-President of Organizational Development

Patrick Scott Smith, Independent Scholar (Nixa, MO), Treasurer

Dennis Horton, Baylor University, Vice-President of Organizational Research

Dallas, Texas

February 28-March 1, 2020

The Year 2020 Proceedings of the ASSR

The Association for the Scientific Study of Religion

Presents

*The Year 2020
Annual Proceedings of the ASSR*

Edited by:

Jon K. Loessin

*Dallas, Texas: ASSR
February 28-March 1, 2020*

President's Note

Welcome once again to the *Proceedings* of Association for the Scientific Study of Religion (ASSR). It is again both an honor and privilege to serve as ASSR President and as editor for *The Year 2020 Proceedings of the ASSR*. 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 talents who bring with them new styles and topics. In addition to our professional academic papers, the ASSR also includes student papers in the *Proceedings* as submitted and presented at the annual meeting, and in addition to the Frank P. Forwood Award for Excellence in Presented Research for professional papers, two student awards are now available—the Harry Hale Prize for Graduate and Undergraduate Research.

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 what it has been, what it is, and what it hopes to become. Joining the ASSR only costs \$20.00 yearly (or a one-time \$100 lifetime membership) and your support and participation in our yearly sessions and helping to make them successful by writing and presenting papers, chairing sessions, contributing to the *Proceedings*, and attending the presentations of others. It is important for our future that every member of the ASSR 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 serving as an officer.

I hope all of you have a good year and the ASSR will be looking forward to your participation in the ASSR in 2020-2021. Be sure to visit us online at: www.assronline.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.

Sincerely,

Jon K. Loessin, 2019-2020 ASSR President/Editor

ASSR Publication Disclaimer:

The content(s) of individual papers printed in this year's ASSR Proceedings is/are the responsibility of the author(s). All authors retain full rights to future publication of papers included in the ASSR Proceedings (i.e., academic journals or other academic forums). Researchers may cite papers from the ASSR Proceedings following standard academic formats. In addition, researchers may desire to contact author(s) directly to inquire about subsequent academic publications based on presented papers included in the ASSR Proceedings.

Table of Contents

Dianne Dentice, Stephen F. Austin State University

Bad Romance: Trouble in the Garden 1

Darren J. N. Middleton, Texas Christian University

Five Works of Art for Five Key Moments in Rastafari History..... 10

Patrick Scott Smith, Independent Scholar

Parthian Culture and Religion..... 22

Elizabeth Kanon, Texas State University and

Ben Craver, Wayland Baptist University—San Antonio

Communities, Loyalties, and Churches 33

Derek de la Peña and Wiley Parkman, Wharton County Junior College

Faith and the “Not-So-Fun” Fundamental Attribution Error 43

Jon K. Loessin, Wharton County Junior College

Grand Designs: Vasco de Quiroga’s Transfiguration of Indigeneity
and the Deliverance of the Purépecha 50

Todd Jay Leonard, Fukuoka University of Education (Japan)

A Contemporary Study of Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp:
Its Historical and Spiritual Legacy 60

Jerry Summers, East Texas Baptist University

Daughterly Speech and Love that Overcomes Death:
„Die Tochter“ of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy 79

2020 Student Papers

Nicholas Elliott, Stephen F. Austin State University

Religion's Staple Dish is Best Served with a Plate of Death!: An Exploration Into the
Absence of Death and its Effects on Religion and Society 92

Madeline Mallia, Baylor University

The Effects of Religiosity on the Coping Ability of Post-Combat Troops 109

Bad Romance: Trouble in the Garden

Dianne Dentice

Stephen F. Austin State University

Wesley Swift's Christian Identity ministry taught that Jews were not actually human but instead direct descendants of Satan, the serpent/arch-angel responsible for the seduction of Eve in the Garden of Eden. According to Swift and others of his ilk, modern Judaism originated in the Garden of Eden and was directly linked to original sin. All the disparate beliefs about Jewish wickedness and deceptiveness acquired a new biblical foundation readily accepted by many in the racist right. Even though Wesley Swift died in 1970, his sermons and pamphlets are still popular among both Christian Identists and others in the movement who may have different religious affiliations. Identity doctrine, in general, is the retelling of Christian tenets in order to justify racist beliefs. Development of racial pride is a key distinguishing factor between whites who belong to racist groups and whites who do not. Findings indicate that we must understand that a segment of the American population inhabiting the racist right has always been anti-Semitic and misogynistic; some of which is stubbornly rooted in various religious ideologies being passed on to the next generation of white nationalists.

Introduction

According to Christian dogma, God created the material universe and gave it order. The book of Genesis tells readers that the universe was formed in steps; with God creating each species separately. The first man, Adam, was formed in God's likeness from the dust of the earth. In order to make Adam's life easier, God created a mate (woman) from Adam's rib. Adam names her Eve and the first couple is given a luscious place to live called Eden as a gift from God. The only rule, ordained by God, was that they were never to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Things did not work out as God intended and that is when life got difficult for Adam and Eve, who were cast out of paradise to a life of toil, strife, and ultimately death.

The Bible, of course, is open to many interpretations. Fundamentalists assert that it is both a scientific and historical document that can be read literally as the word of God. Some of these readers align with the Young-Earth Creationist camp that believes the earth (universe) is roughly 6000 years old (Mortenson, 2009; Mortenson & Ury, 2008). The Big Bang Theory, the leading scientific explanation about how the universe began, states that the universe started small and expanded over the course of 13.8 billion years (Howell, 2017). The position of the Roman Catholic Church is that the narrative in Genesis is historical and takes place at the beginning history of (hu)mankind (Catholic Church, 98). Then you have Protestant Christians who say the Bible is neither a scientific nor a historical document and they treat both creation and the Fall narratives as metaphor and myth. Finally, Christian Identity, an extremist pseudo-religious perspective, supports a racist and anti-

Semitic ideology with regard to salvation. Identists also tend to regard scripture as the literal word of God.

It is from the viewpoint of Christian Identity that I will explore Genesis, creation, and the events that happened in the Garden of Eden.¹ Several questions inform this essay within the Christian Identity context:

- 1) What is original sin?
- 2) Who was the first sinner – Adam or Eve?
- 3) Was Eve approached by a literal snake or by Lucifer (Satan) who shapeshifted² into a man?
- 4) What was the nature of interaction between Eve and Lucifer according to dual seedline adherents?

I begin with an overview of various interpretations of the Fall and Original Sin. The discussion includes a brief biographical sketch of the late Wesley Swift, a Klansman and early Christian Identity minister who formulated a dual seedline theory. I follow with an analysis of a pamphlet by one of his contemporaries, Charles Lee Mange.³ The paper will end with my thoughts about how pseudo-religious and pseudo-scientific ideologies create troubling racist and misogynistic legacies for some segments of the American population.

Various Interpretations of the Fall and Original Sin

Original sin is an Augustine Christian doctrine that states everyone is born in sin; no exceptions. The concept was explained in depth by St. Augustine and formalized as part of Roman Catholic doctrine by the Councils of Trent during the 16th century. The Augustine version posits that sin is transmitted generationally through sexual intercourse. The word he used to express his theory was concupiscence which implies that sexual desire is bad and therefore inseparable from normal human sexual impulses (Augustine, 1984). Disavowing passion was common among Christians during Augustine's time and the Council of Trent (1545-1563) formalized this notion as part of Roman Catholic doctrine. In order to cleanse a soul from original sin, one must: 1) accept that Christ's death on the cross atoned for sin; 2) accept that only God's grace can cure sin; 3) confess one's sins and ask for forgiveness; and 4) be baptized in the church (Vandervelde, 1981). To address the issue of afterlife status of babies who die without having been baptized, Pope Benedict XVI approved International Theological Commission revisions to the

¹ Although Christian Identists are not the same as Young-Earth Creationists they are likely to support the young earth view over the Big Bang Theory with regard to the age of the universe. This assumption is based on interviews I conducted in the field with various Christian Identity ministers and parishioners of Pastor Thom Robb's church in Zinc, Arkansas.

² According to legend, shapeshifting is the ability to physically transform through divine intervention or magic.

³ This is not his real name. He is another shadowy character who was influenced by Swift and who produced a more detailed version of the dual seedline theory in the pamphlet I am analyzing titled *The Two Seeds of Genesis 3:15*.

traditional teaching on Limbo⁴. The report stated that dead infants may be saved and brought into eternal happiness even without having taken the baptismal sacrament.

Williams (2000) points out that the Roman Catholic Church agrees that Genesis uses language referencing the Fall figuratively but then asserts the incident was a primeval event committed by Adam and Eve, humanity's first parents. Williams disagrees with this assessment based on two reasons: 1) Results of the "deed" would not be passed along to offspring because sin is not a characteristic or human trait and 2) Theoretically speaking it is doubtful that there was only one primeval pair due to the fact that evolution does not happen to individuals but rather to populations over time. She also goes on to say that the Catholic Church, although aware of the theological dangers of treating Adam, Eve, and the Fall as myth, does acknowledge there are some inaccuracies in the Bible.

Other scholars such as Childs (1985, 1992) and Westermann (1984) argue over semantics and existential interpretations of the story of Adam and Eve. As Smith (2019) points out, various readings of Genesis are confusing because readers are influenced by passages from other books of the Bible. He goes on to cite Barr (1993) and Fishbane (1979) who assert that Genesis 2 and 3 represent an ascent to moral agency rather than a fall from grace. Smith encourages Christians to read the Hebrew Bible along with the New Testament. He suggests that this type of immersion will increase an understanding of Old Testament Scripture and Genesis, in particular. Again, he quotes Childs (1992: p. 121):

"It is striking that the 'fall tradition' plays virtually no role in the Hebrew Bible until it was revived in the Hellenistic period."

One of the more interesting views on the Fall comes from the teachings of Wesley Swift, one of the most influential white supremacists of the 20th century. He was born in New Jersey in 1913 to a prominent Methodist minister. At age 18, the younger Swift was ordained by the Methodist Church, as well, where he proved to be a dynamic and charismatic minister. During the 1930s, he moved to California and attended the Kingdom Bible College for a period of time. The founder of the college was a theologian named Philip E. J. Monson who was anti-Semitic and a supporter of Hitler (Milwicky, 2019). Swift, who was radicalized by Monson, became one of the chief architects of Christian Identity, a pseudo-religion based entirely on racist and anti-Semitic principles. Among other things, Swift believed that whites were the only race that could achieve salvation and other races, including Jews, were doomed to eternal damnation. He also developed the original version of the dual seedline theory which will be discussed below.

What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?⁵

According to Swift, mainstream Christian teachings were wrong about the Fall of white Adamic man in the Garden of Eden. Citing literal translations of Genesis,

⁴ According to Roman Catholic theology, this is a place where souls are barred from heaven because of not having been baptized.

⁵ The name of a pamphlet and sermon given by Wesley Swift to support his dual seedline theory.

the event was brought on by Eve who was manipulated by a talking snake into eating a piece of fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. She then coerced Adam to eat the forbidden fruit which brought about the end of idyllic life in paradise for the first couple. Swift counters this version of the story. He argues that Eve and Satan engaged in an unholy sexual union. This makes Eve the original sinner.

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field, which the Lord God had made: and he said to the woman, Yea, hath God indeed said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. Then the Serpent said to the woman, Ye shall not die at all.” Genesis 3: 1-4 (Geneva Bible).

Swift tells his congregation that the serpent was not a literal snake, but rather Satan in human form. This brings Swift to a discussion about the war in Heaven between Satan, some rogue angels, and God. Swift also refers to Satan as Lucifer in his pamphlet.

“And there was a battle in heaven, Michael and his Angels, fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought his angels. But they prevailed not, neither was their place found anymore in heaven. And the great dragon that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, was cast out, which deceiveth all the world: he was even cast into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” Revelation 12:7-9 (Geneva Bible).

Swift points out that Satan was cunning and crafty and able to present himself in many different forms. Swift stresses to his readers that the tree of knowledge of good and evil was not a literal tree but instead representative (in a figurative sense) of pre-Adamic (black and yellow) races that surrounded the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve lived. Swift suggests that Lucifer was handsome and white and his good looks and godlike demeanor enabled him to seduce Eve. According to Swift, the following quotation proves his point:

“I have said, Ye are gods, and ye all are children of the most High.” Psalm 82: 6 (Geneva Bible).

Swift continually refers to Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* for definitions. According to Swift's interpretation, the word touch means to lay hands on, to lie with. He states that when you lie with someone it is sexual in nature. He goes on to say that the words eat or ate do not mean the literal consumption of food but rather to consume, devour, to partake. Again, according to his interpretation, when someone partakes, he/she engages in an activity. Swift states that the activity in this instance was Eve's sexual encounter with Lucifer. Eve was eventually called by God to account for her misdeed.

“And the Lord God said to the woman, Why hast thou done this?
And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”
Genesis, 3:13 (Geneva Bible).

The word beguiled, according to Swift, means to morally seduce. According to Swift, this confirms that the grand sin that led to the Fall was sexual in nature.

“So the woman (seeing that the tree was good for meat, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired, to get knowledge) took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat.” Genesis 3:6 (Geneva Bible).

“Then the man said, The woman which thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” Genesis 3:12 (Geneva Bible).

These passages prove (according to Swift) that Eve convinced Adam to have sex with a woman from one of the pre-Adamic races living outside the Garden, thus sealing the fate of the first couple. Upon the birth of Cain, Swift introduces the dual seedline hypothesis. Two literal, biological seedlines came from Eve; Cain, the seedline of Lucifer (Satan), represents evil and Abel, the seedline of Adam, represents good.

“Then Cain spake unto Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. Then the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? Who answered, I cannot tell. Am I my brother’s keeper? Again he said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me, from the earth. Now therefore thou art cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thine hand. When thou shalt till the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength: a vagabond and a runagate shalt thou be in the earth.” Genesis 4:8-12 (Geneva Bible).

Swift ends his sermon saying there will be enmity between the two seedlines for eternity and in the end of days the Satantic seed will be crushed and white Adamic man will once again have dominion over the earth.

The Two Seeds of Genesis 3: 15⁶

Mange (1998) writes that until Christians are ready to accept the fact that God, in the consequence of sin’s entry into the world, placed hatred between two opposing seedlines (Satan to the left of Genesis and Adam to the right), they will never have knowledge of the full truth of the Bible’s teaching. From the beginning,

⁶ This is the name of a pamphlet written by Charles Lee Mange. I believe the original date of publication was in 1977. The version I have was printed in 1998.

these two opposing seedlines have been part of human history. The seed of the serpent constitutes a literal, flesh and blood people (Jews), who are determined to claim dominion over the earth to the glory of Satan, their father. In Mange's worldview, Jesus was descended directly from Adam and represents all Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, Scandinavian, and Slavonic peoples of the western world. He offers some insights into Cain which I will explore in detail.

Mange argues that Cain was allowed to live after killing his brother for a couple of reasons. By being born first from the womb of Eve, Cain claimed the right of the firstborn and if he had been killed, the consequences of Original Sin would have been eliminated. Man would have been free to sin with no consequences. For these reasons, Cain's life had to be spared. The union between Eve (who was made from the rib of Adam) and Satan (a fallen arch-angel) produced the counterfeit bastard seed (Cain), a product of the evil union in the Garden of Eden, Satan's main objective was to pollute the pure white racial root stock represented by Adam and Eve. Mange goes on to say that it was absolutely necessary for Jesus (the second Adam) to regain his true roots through a virgin birth. By the hand of God, Jesus Christ was born from unpolluted Adamic white stock.

Mange echoes Swift here in his musings that Cain is missing from Adam's genealogy because he was not Adam's son but rather the spawn of Satan. He then asks why Jesus traced the lineage of Jewish Pharisees back to Cain? He explains that Jesus Christ indicted the Jewish Pharisees as a race of vipers blaming them for righteous blood shed upon the earth beginning with Abel, who was killed by his brother, Cain. He speaks to the Jews in the following passage.

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he hath been a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, then speaketh he of his own: for he is a liar and the father thereof." John 8:44 (Geneva Bible).

This clearly shows (in Mange's mind) that Jews came from the seed of Satan and not Adam, again proving his point that Jews are not the chosen people of God. Furthermore, according to Mange, Cain was a man marked for life with the physical traits of swarthy skin and a prominent nose proving his lineage. Mange's final warning is that Christians must beware that the children of Cain (Jewish people) still walk the earth. They successfully accomplished Satan's first goal of killing Jesus on the cross. Mange urges his readers to be diligent because the evil descendants of Cain will eventually destroy Christ's legacy, Christianity.

Discussion

I grew up attending the Church of Christ in a small East Texas town. My minister preached that God created living things by the power of His Word and that alone. God created Adam from dust and breathed life into him. Pastor Roche stated in many of his sermons that these descriptions of the origin of life are the only scientifically logical descriptions we humans have since the most complete explanation for the world and for life is found in Scripture. He also preached that

one serious error evolutionists make is they assume that life is nothing more than physical biological actions of human bodies. He ended many sermons stating that the Bible teaches us that we are spiritual as well as material creatures. A life that does not include spiritual elements is incomplete and much less than God desires. He also never missed a chance to remind us that creation started on Day One and God rested from his labors on Day Seven. I did not know this then, but Pastor Roche was technically a Young-Earth Creationist, although that term was not part of the vernacular at the time.

Regarding the Fall, fundamentalist churches like the one where I grew up did not place a lot of emphasis on the type of tree and fruit presented in the Genesis story. I did learn in Sunday school that the fruit was an apple and we only saw pictures of Adam and Eve clothed in fig leaves, never naked. What was stressed in our lessons was that prior to the making of Eve, Adam was instructed by God, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In one story passed on by Pastor Roche, the first couple were pre-pubescent children, approximately 12 years of age. Then came seven years of innocence during which time Adam told Eve about the forbidden tree. Along comes the serpent who tells Eve that she will not die if she eats the forbidden fruit but rather will become Godlike with the knowledge she obtains. Eve convinces Adam to eat the fruit and they immediately realize they made a mistake. For the first time in their short lives they experience guilt. God comes calling and they are cast out of the Garden and the serpent is relegated to a life of slithering in the dirt.

Leaving out the sexual interpretation presented in Swift's dual seedline theory, the stories of Adam, Eve, and the serpent are similar in both renditions. If one goes back even further than the 1930s when Wesley Swift came on the scene and the 1950s when I was a young girl attending the Church of Christ in an East Texas town, there were theologians who presented their stories of the Fall. I will mention a man named E.G. White who wrote a book titled *The Great Controversy*, published in 1888. He concluded that the Bible is the infallible word of God and before the entrance of evil, the world was in a "constant state of peace and harmony" (1888 [2008], p. 266). In his discussion about the origin of evil, White places Lucifer in a divine place alongside many cherubs in heaven. Unfortunately for Lucifer, he became self-indulgent and imagined himself on the same astral plane as God. He also failed to acknowledge that Christ was the true son of God and deserved equal status with his maker. For his transgressions, Lucifer was kicked out of heaven where he encountered Adam and brought sin into the world. White does not mention Eve. The role Satan, Adam, and Eve played in this story is open to many interpretations, both scholarly and fundamentalist. The thing that most people (including biblical scholars) tend to agree with is that human sin and the Fall are chronicled in Genesis.

Concluding Remarks

Swift's theology taught that Jews were not actually human but instead direct descendants of Satan, the serpent/arch-angel responsible for the seduction of Eve in the Garden of Eden. According to Swift and others of his ilk, modern Judaism

originated in the Garden of Eden and was directly linked to original sin. All the disparate beliefs about Jewish wickedness and deceptiveness acquired a new biblical foundation readily accepted by many in the racist right. Even though Wesley Swift died in 1970, his sermons and pamphlets are still popular among both Christian Identists and others in the movement who may have other religious affiliations. Identity doctrine, in general, is the retelling of Christian tenets in order to justify racist beliefs. Development of racial pride is a key distinguishing factor between whites who belong to racist groups and whites who do not. Contemporary Arkansas Identity minister, Thom Robb, has preached for years that creation of a collective racial consciousness will unify the white supremacist movement socially and politically (Dentice, 2014).

Approximately 2.1 million citizens of the United States participated in an Anti-Defamation League world survey beginning in July 2013 and ending in February 2014. Many of the respondents harbor varying levels of anti-Semitic beliefs with roughly 9% of the sample answering “probably true” to a majority of anti-Semitic stereotypes (ADL Global 100 Executive Summary, 2014). When asked if they think Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the United States, 31% of the respondents answered true. In response to the statement that Jews talk too much about the Holocaust, 22% responded true. Regarding power questions, 18% agreed with the statement that Jews have too much power in the business world and 15% agreed they have too much power in the international financial markets. Regarding Jewish control over global media, 12% agreed and 11% agreed that Jews have too much control over the United States government.

One of the defining points of hatred in Christian Identity circles is Jewish people. Swift’s theory suggests that the illicit union between Eve and Satan was the seed that produced undesirables such as Jews. Mange (1998) took things even further when he described Cain as swarthy with a hooked nose, thus sealing his racial identity. Unfortunately, Swift’s and Mange’s work that is profiled in this paper are just two Christian Identity books/pamphlets among many that link Jews directly to Satan and all the evil that exists in the world today. Racism and anti-Semitism are closely related concepts especially given the fact that Jews have been (historically) described as dark skinned and suffering from “choleric and melancholic temperaments” (Pritchard, 1973: p. 186). By the mid-nineteenth century, all races were described in terms of being either beautiful (white) or ugly (dark).

Again, referencing the Anti-Defamation League Survey, anti-Semitic attitudes are persistent globally and not just in the United States. When it comes to Holocaust awareness, only 54% of the global population polled had ever heard about it. In countries where there are very few, if any Jews, many respondents indicated they are anti-Semitic. In English-speaking countries such as the United States, the percentage of people with negative attitudes toward Jewish people is relatively low when compared to developing countries. Protestant majority countries have the lowest overall ratings on the anti-Semitism scale which leaders in the Jewish community perceive as progress. What we must continually be aware of, however, is that a segment of the American population that inhabits the far right, has always been anti-Semitic and racist; some of which is stubbornly rooted in various religious ideologies that are being passed on to the next generation of white nationalists.

Biographical Note

Dianne Dentice holds a Ph.D. in sociology from Texas Women's University, and her research interests include extremist social movements, transgender workplace rights issues and education inequality in minority populations. Dr. Dentice is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas.

References

- ADL Global 100 Executive Summary (2014) @ <http://global100.adl.org/public/ADL-Global-100-Executive-Summary.pdf> (Accessed September 7, 2019).
- Augustine. (1984). *Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans*. London: Penguin Books.
- Barr, James. (1993). *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Catholic Church. (1994). *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.
- Childs, Brevard. (1985). *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press.
- (1992). *Biblical Theology of Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Dentice, Dianne. (2014). Pseudo-religion, White Spaces, and the Knights Party: A Case Study. *Geographies of Religions and Belief Systems*, Vol. 4(1) @ <http://gorabs.org/journal/issues/2014/index.htm>.
- Fishbane, Michael. (1979). *Text and Texture: Close Readings in Selected Biblical Texts*. NY: Schocken.
- Geneva Bible. (2006). White Hall, WV: Tolle Lege Press.
- Howell, Elizabeth. (2017). Big Bang Theory. Retrieved on August 5, 2019 from Science & Astronomy @ <https://www.space.com/25126-big-bang-theory.html>
- Mange, Charles Lee. (1998). *The Two Seeds of Genesis 3:15*. Harrison, Arkansas: Kingdom Identity Ministries.
- Milwiki, Along. (2019). Baptizing Nazism: An Analysis of the Religious Roots of American Neo-Nazism. Unpublished dissertation: American University.
- Mortenson, Terry, (2009). Systematic Theology Texts and the Age of the Earth: A Response to the Views of Erickson, Grudem, and Lewis and Demarest. *Answers Research Journal* @ www.answersingenesis.org/arj/v2/systematic-theology-texts.pdf
- Mortenson, Terry and Ury, T.H. (2008). *Coming to grips with Genesis*. Green Forest, Arkansas: Master Books.
- Pritchard, J. (1973). *Researches into the Physical History of Man*. Chicago, ILL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Redd, Nola Taylor. (2019). How old is the universe? Retrieved on June 8, 2019 from Science & Astronomy @ <https://www.space.com/24054-how-old-is-the-universe.html>
- Smith, Mark S. (2019). *The Genesis of Good and Evil: The Fall(out) and Original Sin in the Bible*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Swift, Wesley. (Date of publication unknown). What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden <https://israelect.cochurchOfTruelsrael/swift/sw-what-happened.html>. Accessed June 30, 2018.
- Vanderveelde, George. (1981). *Original Sin: Two Major Trends in Contemporary Roman Catholic Reinterpretation*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America.
- Westerman, Claus. (1984). *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press.
- White, E. G. (1888 [2008]). *The Great Controversy: The Storm is Coming*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Company.
- Williams, Patricia. (2000). Sociobiology and Original Sin, *Zygon*, Vol. 35(4): 783-812.

Five Works of Visual Art for Five Key Moments in Rastafari History

Darren J. N. Middleton
Texas Christian University

Introduction

With a history stretching back to mid-1930s black street preachers in Kingston, Jamaica, especially their response to the coronation of His Imperial Majesty (H.I.M.) Emperor Haile Selassie I (1892-1975) on November 2, 1930, the Rastafari religious movement now numbers one million global followers.¹ Even more come to appreciate this faith – “livity,” in the language of the Rastafari – through reggae. From Dubtonic Kru’s “Marcus Garvey” to Early B’s “Visit of King Selassie,” such music has created an aural chronicle of key moments in Rastafari’s developing history. Recognizing that there is no shortage of scholars discussing reggae, this essay seeks to do something different, even as it appreciates this genre’s reputation as the major mechanism of transmission for the movement’s message.² Here, I probe the part played by visual expressions of Rastafari livity, culture and politics in Jamaica.

There is a brief history to this topic. The National Gallery of Jamaica, the island’s public art museum, opened in 1974, the year Bob Marley and the Wailers released *Natty Dread*, the band’s seventh studio album, and in 1980, the year Marley dropped his final LP, *Uprising*, the Gallery’s curators installed works in mixed media by many intuitive artists, some of them self-identifying Rastafari. Albert Artwell (1942-2018) and Ras Dizzy (1932-2008) were, at the time, just two of several artists working with plywood, oil drum lids, door panels, and entire houses to raise the world’s literacy level on Rasta. The classic study in this largely unexplored area of Rastafari Studies is Wolfgang Bender’s English translation of a catalogue assembled for exhibitions in Germany in 1980 and 1991. First published in 2005, Bender’s eye-catching volume indexes the artists and their accomplishments, features selected interviews, provides an outline of Rastafari theology, and displays photographs of the Jamaican sacredscape that placed Rastafari on the world’s cultural map.³ Bender detects little, if any, uniformity in the art he showcases, however, and given the Rastafari movement’s acephalous character, it is not at all difficult to grasp why the “markedly individualistic strains of Rastafarianism are pursued by Rastafari artists” throughout his book.⁴

I propose something different. Since Rastafari bredren and sistren share their faith’s almost 90-year history, and frequently use various forms of reggae music to

¹ For an overview of the movement, see Ennis B. Edmonds, *Rastafari: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). Also see Darren J. N. Middleton, *Rastafari and the Arts: An Introduction* (New York and London: Routledge, 2015).

² See the essays in Carolyn Cooper, ed., *Global Reggae* (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 2012).

³ Wolfgang Bender, ed., *Rastafarian Art* (Kingston, Jamaica; Miami: Ian Randle Publishers, 2005).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

chant such common chronology, this essay considers five Rastafari visual artists who seem united, for the most part, by their ardent desire to present the wider culture with pictographic milestones in the development of the Rastafari movement. Their works evoke memories of InI spiritual trod, insiders might say, and outsiders in search of links to the Rastafari archives, as it were, will find in the featured paintings much to discover about Marcus Garvey's Elijah-like mission; Leonard Howell and the first Rasta commune, Pinnacle; the "Bad Friday" incident at Coral Gardens; the state visit of H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie I to Jamaica; and, Bob Marley's iconic status as the one who publically advanced the Rastafari message and later inspired, with his image and his legacy's global impact, the movement's unending errand to the world.

Marcus Garvey



Figure I: Ras Jah Bobby, "Marcus Garvey Mural" (n.d.)

The Rastafari timeline begins with Marcus Mosiah Garvey (1887-1940), one of the last century's most moving orators and major political activists.⁵ His desire to

⁵ For details, see Noel Leo Erskine, *From Garvey to Marley: Rastafari Theology* (Gainesville, Florida: The University Press of Florida, 2007).

centralize race consciousness in the international struggle for black freedom from white oppression mobilized African and African descendents first, by valuing their personhood, second, by inspiring their autonomy, and third, by inviting them to tell their own stories in the context of Africa's own unfurling narrative. Garvey stressed the wonders of the African world, as his talks and writings show, and his passion for promulgating as well as learning the continent's cultural heritage became, in time, matchlessly animating. Ras Jah Bobby's Kingston-based mural, one of many that now dot the Jamaican sacredscape, uses Garvey's pan-African philosophy to link notions of black somebodiness to international racial unity by means of Motherland consciousness. See Figure 1. Garvey's eyes are on his words, resembling his unblinking scrutiny of ancestral wisdom, and there is a hint to the ethical overlay of Rasta: never lose sight of Africa, the Black Person's Vine and Fig Tree (Micah 4:4).

In 1914, the year Ras Tafari Makonnen was installed as Prince Regent of Ethiopia, Garvey launched the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in his native Jamaica. Other branches of this Association soon followed and, in 1920, Garvey held the first UNIA Convention in Harlem. He exhorted black people to Africanize God and implored diasporic Africans to return home. Ras Tafari sent Garvey an admiring telegram. In Garvey's philosophy, then, race and religion commingle; and this mix may best be seen in his belief that all black eyes should gaze upon their Motherland and look for the crowning of an African king-redeemer. Rastas often date Garvey's belief to 1928. And the coronation of Ras Tafari Makonnen, Haile Selassie I, as H.I.M. Emperor of Ethiopia on November 2, 1930, transformed Garvey's conviction into Rasta prophecy.

Ras Jah Bobby's landscape inscription is not simply an aesthetic gesture to Garvey's influence on Rastafari culture, it exemplifies the spatial identity politics that Jamaican urban geographers find fascinating.⁶

Leonard P. Howell and "Pinnacle"

Sometime in 1933 or 1934, the Garveyite Leonard P. Howell (1898-1981) took to the streets and became the first person in Jamaica to preach Selassie I's divinity, working from scripture to emphasize that "the Lion of the Tribe of Judah" and "King of Kings" (Rev 5:5; 17:14; 19:11-16) were two of His Imperial Majesty's more significant Bible-based aliases.⁷ Howell also stressed Selassie I's claim to be a descendent of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba—a claim associated with 1 Kgs 10 and the *Kebra Negast* ("Glory of the Kings"), a fourteenth-century national

⁶ See Kevon Rhiney and Romain Cruse, "'Trench Town Rock': Reggae Music, Landscape Inscription, and the Making of Place in Kingston, Jamaica." *Urban Studies Research* (2012): 1-12. Open access article. Article ID 585160. doi: 10.1155/2012/585160. For additional details on Rastafari murals and signboards, see Bender, *Rastafarian Art*, 77-85.

⁷ On Howell's life and legacy, see Hélène Lee, *The First Rasta: Leonard Howell and the Rise of Rastafarianism* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003). Also see Clinton A. Hutton, et.al., *Leonard Percival Howell and the Genesis of Rastafari* (Kingston, Jamaica: The University of West Indies Press, 2015).

myth or legend cycle concerning the Solomonic ancestry of Ethiopia's Emperors. Christ had returned to our broken world in the person of H.I.M. Haile Selassie I, Howell believed, and His Imperial Majesty was the Earth's Rightful Ruler.

Although Howell's preaching led to jail-time for sedition, his brief captivity inspired him to write a fourteen-page pamphlet, *The Promised Key*, which he published in 1935. Written under his Hindu pseudonym G.G. (Gong Guru; "the teacher of famed wisdom") Maragh, Howell's tract articulates early Rasta reverence for Africa, strict moral prescriptions concerning Rasta livity, and it repudiates Christianity as a white man's religion before it extols Selassie I as the promised key that unlocks salvation's door to blacks trapped in diaspora.⁸ Howell inaugurated the Ethiopian Salvation Society in 1937, and in 1940 he took sistren and bredren to an area high above Jamaica's old capital, Spanish Town, and from here he organized Pinnacle, the first Rastafari commune. Police raids in July 1941 and May 1954 put an end to this project, turning Pinnacle into a symbol of noble failure, and the Rastafari who fled soon resettled in the slums of western Kingston.⁹

Almost forty-years after his death, Howell continues to serve as one of the Rastafari movement's pivotal players. He nurtured the movement in its early period, encouraging group identity through textual nostalgia, and his Pinnacle was Rasta's first vision of the promised land, an inspired way to cope with the evils of the West, "Babylon" in the language of the Rastafari. Ras Elijah's oil on canvas painting, "The Gong," captures some of the aforementioned historical details. See Figure II. The newly-crowned and slightly elevated Selassie I stands with Howell, the Gong Guru, and the evocative words of Rev 5:5, serving as confessional name and regal title alike, link the two figures, one divine and the other foundational. Howell's revered text, *The Promised Key*, is located nearby, adorned with the red, gold and green colors of Ethiopia and, like the flag blazing across Howell's chest, the text's cover displays Rastafari art's most popular motif, the lion, which symbolizes Selassie I's messianic status. Images of the self-sustaining village of Pinnacle complete Ras Elijah's artwork, and they serve as a reminder that this heritage site pulsates with sacred energy.

These days, Pinnacle is embattled and thriving – an instructive example of Rastafari place-making and contestation. Musicians Dub Iration and Jah Free used Ras Elijah's painting on their four-track EP, "Leonard P. Howell," which they dropped in 2016, and they donated proceeds from all sales to Occupy Pinnacle, the Bob Marley family-endorsed campaign to safeguard the site of Jamaica's inaugural

⁸ The full text of Howell's pamphlet is available in numerous formats. I recommend William David Spencer, "The First Chant: Leonard Howell's *The Promised Key*, with commentary by William David Spencer." In *Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader*, eds. Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, William David Spencer, and Adrian Anthony McFarlane (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 361-89.

⁹ On Howell's perceived threat to his society, see D. A. Dunkley, "The Suppression of Leonard Howell in Late Colonial Jamaica, 1932-1954." *New West Indian Guide* 87 (2013): 62-93.

Rastafari community.¹⁰ Although Occupy Pinnacle’s campaign symbol appears center right of the album cover, it is absent from Ras Elijah’s original painting.¹¹



Figure II: Ras Elijah, “The Gong” (2016)

Coral Gardens, or, “Bad Friday”

Government forces raided Pinnacle in 1941, causing considerable damage to the property and heightened fear within the residents, but the first Rastas rallied and, with Howell’s help, they fortified themselves by rebuilding their version of Zion in the St. Jago Hills. The dream lasted for over ten years. And then, on Saturday, May 22,

¹⁰ On the Marley link to Pinnacle, see: <https://www.marleynatural.com/blog/pinnacle-jamaica-history> Accessed Apr. 27, 2020.

¹¹ For Ras Elijah’s personal site, see: <http://blog.raselijah.com/> Accessed Apr. 27, 2020.

1954, Jamaican police destroyed Pinnacle. Over 4500 settlers scattered. Although some Rastafari remained out in the country, many moved to Kingston. For his part, Howell lived the rest of his long life wondering what might have been.

Jamaican Rastafari of the 1950s and 1960s, who behaved like withdrawn quietists or mutinous firebrands, eventually found themselves on society's margins. Many marched through Kingston in protest. Rastas annexed public property, flouted social convention, and some broke laws. The government hurriedly sought to repress the movement. Reasoning sessions, also known as "groundation" gatherings, were often broken up by the police, and several shared efforts to repatriate to Africa, as Garvey advised, ended in fighting and failure. On Holy Thursday, April 11, 1963, minor violence erupted between Rastas and housing developers in Coral Gardens, close to Montego Bay. Unrest continued into Good Friday. "Rastas on rampage," the newspaper headlines bemoaned, rousing their base of hard-hearted opponents of all things Rasta. The Jamaican Prime Minister, Alexander Bustamente, flew to Montego Bay, rallied regional police forces, and then, on April 12, Good Friday, he instructed his officers to round up what he saw as lawless agitators. "Bring in all Rastas," he ordered, "dead or alive."¹²

These words appear center right of Ras Ato Kidane Daniel Roberts's "Cold Blooded," his 2019 colored pencil account of the Coral Gardens atrocity, also known as the Bad Friday incident.¹³ See Figure III. Bustamente's chilling phrase materializes in red colored pencil, next to blood dripping from the clenched hands of one of the over 150 Rastas who were arrested, tortured and jailed. Police cruelty included beatings, followed by forcible trimming of a devotee's hair, contra the Nazarite Vow (Num. 6:1-21). The artwork's center middle shows a bearded Rasta, dreadlocks conspicuously absent, as he remonstrates with the authorities, A solitary Rasta also appears brutally set upon by police officers wielding truncheons; and, MoBay's streets are soaked with the blood of countercultural but innocent religious. The only other words in this art belong to Ancient Bongo Frank, a Coral Gardens atrocity survivor, and the hose in the panel's bottom left tenders proof to his shocking claim: "When deh lick yuh and di blood start flow, dem turn on the water and wash weh di blood."

Documentary films and scholarly studies have, over time, probed this tragic event's causes and effects, noting how the police raid on Coral Gardens activated coast-to-coast intimidation and maltreatment of the Rastafari movement.¹⁴ The blood never washed away, not completely, and later generations of Rastas in this part of Western Jamaica have, since the 1990s, linked themselves to their faith's chain of

¹² Edmonds, *Rastafari*, 21-22. For an eye-witness account of this tragedy, see Prince Williams, with Michael Kuelker, *Book of Memory: A Rastafari Testimony* (St. Louis: CaribSound Ltd., 2004).

¹³ For Roberts's personal site, see: <https://www.1artofthecovenant.com/> Accessed Apr. 27, 2020. Roberts is the son of Ras Daniel Heartman (1942-89), one of the most celebrated as well as recognized Rastafari visual artists. For details, see: <https://www.rasdanielheartman.com/> Accessed Apr. 27, 2020.

¹⁴ For the official site for the "Bad Friday" film, see <http://www.badfridaythemovie.com/bad-friday.htm> Accessed Apr. 27, 2020.

memory and kept public ritual. Such annual commemorations have not gone unnoticed. In April 2017, for example, Jamaican authorities apologized for their awful actions in 1963, and they established a trust fund – a form of reparations – for the incident’s survivors.¹⁵



Figure III: Ras Ato Kinde Daniel Roberts, “Cold Blooded” (2019)

Visit of H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie I to Jamaica

H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie I toured the Caribbean in 1966, making state visits to Barbados, Haiti, Jamaica and Trinidad. The crowd response on each leg of the journey seemed special. 100,000 Jamaicans welcomed Selassie I at the Kingston airport after his plane arrived on April 21. Rasta elder Mortimer Planno (1929-2006) was at hand. Planno influenced the University of West Indies sociological *Report* on the Rastas in 1960, which tried to correct some of the many misunderstandings of the movement, and he served as one of four Rastafari

¹⁵ Barbara Makeda Blake Hannah, onetime Jamaican Senator and Elder Empress of the Rastafari Faith, has been hard at work with the Jamaican Government, administering the historic payment in December 2019 of reparations to the survivors of the Coral Gardens incident.

delegates in the 1961 state-sponsored “Back to Africa” mission to five African countries to ascertain their openness to repatriation. Mortimer Planno also taught the young Bob Marley, schooling him in Africana studies and, over time, Planno nurtured reggae’s global ambassador in Rastafari livity.¹⁶

An untitled and undated painting by an unknown artist depicts the pandemonium at the Palisadoes Airport (now the Norman Manley International Airport). See Figure IV. Wearing his service dress uniform and saluting the exuberant crowd on the tarmac, which included state dignitaries and throngs of ganja-smoking Rastas, Selassie I disembarks from Ethiopia’s flag carrier. Mortimer Planno invites the crowd to quiet. The last few gray clouds drift away to the right, edged out by the glowing light of radiant sunshine. A rainbow in Ethiopia’s colors, perhaps symbolizing divine mercy, hovers in grace nearby. The diminutive Emperor conveys an imposing aura, powerful and majestic as the Lion of Judah and innocent as a sacrificial lamb. Rastas in the crowd that day were quick to mythologize him; many reported seeing seven white doves, each one a presage of the presence of the living God, Jah Rastafari, among God’s people (Mark 1:10; Acts 2).



Figure IV: Artist unknown, “No Title” (n.d.).¹⁷

¹⁶ Edmonds, *Rastafari*, 20-24, 85.

¹⁷ One or two of the visual artists I feature have a personal site. This said, some individuals have proved difficult to reach and/or their work hard to source. Every effort has been made to trace existing copyright holders and to obtain their permission for the use of copyright material. I apologize for any

Our painting depicts this modern-day Jah-ophany, the divine condescension by the shore of the Caribbean Sea, and although we do not witness God's next step, as it were, we do know that Mortimer Planno seemed as surprised as the other Rastas in attendance when Selassie I did not walk down the red carpet rolled out for his arrival. To this day, sistren and bredren commemorate the Elect of God's act of humility with an annual ritual, Grounation Day, which occurs on the anniversary of Selassie I's visit and features Nyabinghi drumming.¹⁸

Bob Marley, Icon

Bob Marley (1945-81) was and still remains Rastafari reggae's international emissary. Mortimer Planno functioned as his spiritual guru, as I have mentioned, yet I would be remiss if I failed to mention Marley's wife, Rita, and the dramatic story of her conversion, which she tells in numerous documentaries about her husband's life and witness. Her narrative picks up where the previous painting leaves off, so to speak, because Rita saw something special on the Emperor's drive from the airport to the capital. As his motorcade passed by Rita, Selassie I waved and then nodded to her; in his open palm, Rita believed she saw Jesus Christ's crucified nail prints (2 Jn 1:7), "and from that moment on, her faith was unwavering," one biographer writes. Rita's conversion "deeply impressed her husband and influenced him to study and accept the Rastafarian beliefs that became so essential to his music and philosophy."¹⁹

Many books have been written about Bob Marley's commitment to Rastafari, including several for the academy, and some add rich detail and bring to vivid life the tuneful spiritual force that fans and friends alike call Tuff Gong, a nickname that links Marley to Leonard Howell. At least two examples of Marley's spiritual courage stand out. On December 3, 1976, two days before a free concert – "Smile Jamaica" – that was designed to respond to political disorder in Kingston, an unknown marksman broke into 56 Hope Road, Marley's home, and injured three individuals, including the singer. Relocating to the Bahamas and then to England created the distance Marley needed to write and record new Rastafari hymns, stirring anthems like "Jamming," which speaks of bullets being unable to stop the righteous from their journey to Zion. Marley's brush with death fostered fresh creativity, and it inspired him to redouble his efforts in using reggae to bring people together, as evinced by his performance in the April 22, 1978 "One Love Peace Concert," during which he worked the audience into a frenzy by bringing two rival politicians up on stage to join hands. Neither People's National Party advocate nor Jamaica Labor Party backer, Marley, who was bi-racial, found himself in the middle, on the platform as in life, and his liminality

errors or omissions. I would, of course, be very grateful if notified – d.middleton2@tcu.edu – of any corrections that should be incorporated in future reprints or revisions of this article.

¹⁸ Edmonds, 52-70.

¹⁹ Joan Goldsworthy, "Rita Marley Biography." *Musician Biographies*, 2009. <https://www.musicanguide.com/biographies/1608001329/Rita-Marley.html>. Accessed Apr. 27, 2020.

helped him unite others. Let me add that Marley had to fly back from exile in London to perform at this concert, and footage of fans greeting him at the Kingston airport evokes the mood of joyous bedlam that Selassie I found when his plane arrived in April 1966.

Tragedy accompanied Marley's triumphs. He developed cancer, and although he initially invoked his Rastafari livity and refused medical assistance, he eventually sought treatment. Chemotherapy rounds caused Marley's locks to fall out, and Kevin Macdonald's 2012 documentary informs us that Marley read the book of Job as the remaining dreads were cut.²⁰ Bob Marley died on May 11, 1981; he was only thirty-six years old. While not by definition a martyr, he was struck down in his prime. Perhaps because, like many martyrs, he died at the zenith of his professional and personal life, as a young, gallant, athletic, musical black prince, he quickly rose from the dead, and today, his afterlife is well known. Marley is an icon. We see Marley everywhere these days, from relaxation drinks to lava-lamps, and scholars are exploring, even lamenting, such commodification of Rasta, yet I suspect Marley's iconic status may best be seen in the large-scale murals that enhance his Museum, which is located at the Kingston home where the 1976 assassination attempt took place.²¹ See Figure V.



Figure V: Nana Yaw Ananse, "No Title" (2020)

²⁰ For the official site for Macdonald's film, see <http://www.magpictures.com/marley/> Accessed Apr. 27, 2020.

²¹ On Marley's Museum, see: <https://www.bobmarleymuseum.com/> Accessed Apr. 27, 2020.

Songs titles from Marley's discography coalesce to form a tree bearing the singer's recognizable face. A nearby sound system, another instructive feature of Jamaican culture, reminds us of Tuff Gong's sonic dominance. Vinyl records seem to bud like leaves from tree branches that resemble flashing dreadlocks. The tree roots perhaps return us to Garvey's words on Ras Jah Bobby's mural: "A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots." They certainly take us back to nature, the gift of Jah, which seems to be glowing with an almost resplendent glory. Three little birds complete the scene, this time perched on a wire rather than pitched on a doorstep, and the risin' sun preaches, as Bob often taught, that "every little thing gonna be alright." If some Rastafari await Selassie I's return, following his death in 1975, Marley has been resurrected, again and again, to inspire a sense of black somebodiness and cultural agency long-denied by Babylon

Conclusion

The recent works of Rasta visual art that I have seen appear to satisfy an aesthetic and didactic purpose: they teach through beauty. In summer 2013, the Institute of Jamaica (IOJ) in association with members of the island's Rastafari community showcased artefacts, paintings and utensils at Kingston's Water Lane Gallery. The following year, the National Museum of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa hosted a multi-media exhibit on Selassie I and the Rastafari movement. Such expositions were not the first of their kind, as we know from Wolfgang Bender's classic study, and they will not be the last. Today reggae is internationalized, and it still ranks as the mechanism of choice for the transmission of the Rastafari message, yet the Rastafari visual art I have curated, and perhaps much more besides, is becoming a factor to reckon with, because it illustrates the movement's historical timeline and spiritual insights for our increasingly visual age.

Praise Jah, from whom all artistic blessings flow.

Biographical Note

A native of Nottingham, England, **Darren J. N. Middleton** is John F. Weatherly Professor of Religion at Texas Christian University, where he has taught since 1998. He has published twelve books on comparative literature, theology and the arts.

Works Cited

Bender, Wolfgang, ed. *Rastafarian Art*. Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2005.

Cooper, Carolyn, ed. *Global Reggae*. Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 2012.

Dunkley, D. A. "The Suppression of Leonard Howell in Late Colonial Jamaica, 1932-1954." *New West Indian Guide* 87 (2013): 62-93.

Ennis B. Edmonds, *Rastafari: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Erskine, Noel Leo. *From Garvey to Marley: Rastafari Theology*. Gainesville, Florida: The University Press of Florida, 2007.

Hutton, Clinton A. et. al. *Leonard Percival Howell and the Genesis of Rastafari*. Kingston, Jamaica: The University of West Indies Press, 2015.

Lee, Hélène. *The First Rasta: Leonard Howell and the Rise of Rastafarianism*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003.

Middleton, Darren J. N. *Rastafari and the Arts: An Introduction*. New York and London: Routledge, 2015.

Rhiney, Kevon and Romain Cruse, "Trench Town Rock': Reggae Music, Landscape Inscription, and the Making of Place in Kingston, Jamaica." *Urban Studies Research* (2012): 1-12.

Spencer, William David. "The First Chant: Leonard Howell's *The Promised Key*, with commentary by William David Spencer." In *Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader*, eds. Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, William David Spencer, and Adrian Anthony McFarlane (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 361-89.

Williams, Prince, with Michael Kuelker, *Book of Memory: A Rastafari Testimony*. St. Louis: CaribSound Ltd., 2004.

All websites accessed Apr. 27, 2020

<http://www.badfridaythemovie.com/bad-friday.htm>

<https://www.bobmarleymuseum.com/>

<https://www.1artofthecovenant.com/>

<http://www.magpictures.com/marley/>

<https://www.marleynatural.com/blog/pinnacle-jamaica-history>

<https://www.musicianguide.com/biographies/1608001329/Rita-Marley.html>.

<https://www.rasdanielheartman.com/>

<http://blog.raselijah.com/>

Parthian Culture and Religion

*Patrick Scott Smith
Independent Scholar*

Introduction

The description “forgotten civilization” almost applies to Parthia. Without a written history little was known about Parthia except what was recorded by her enemies. But more is coming to light. Emerging from the steppe of Central Asia, the nomadic Parni, came to control a vast realm that lasted five-hundred years. Ruling from 247 BCE to 224 CE, theirs was an empire that stretched between the Mediterranean in the west to India in the east. The written history we have of the Parthians indeed comes from the Greeks and Romans. Since they were conquerors of the Greeks and able competitors of Rome, comparisons are essential. In the following exercise we will find as a contemporary of Rome, and like Rome, Parthia’s culture was one of war and expansion. But different from Rome, Parthia developed its own unique culture. Known for its unique fighting style it even warred differently than other nations. In competition with Rome it was itself a commercial juggernaut. But just as important, with influences from the east and west, it created its own unique culture in the way of dress, art, architectural style and religion. Parthia’s religion was different from that of the Romans and Greeks, even the Egyptians, in the sense its rulers allowed a polyglot of faiths with no one belief system dominating. Which may have been key to their having ruled for 500 years.

Origins: The Defeat of the Greeks

To start with, the story of Parthia cannot be told without Alexander the Great. Son of Phillip II of Macedon, he and his father adopted the best military techniques and weaponry of their time.¹ With an unstoppable desire to conquer, Alexander took those techniques and led his soldiers on a remarkable foray into other lands. Conquering Egypt, Persia, Syria, and Mesopotamia, he even established footholds in India. After his untimely death at the age of thirty-two, his generals divvied up the areas taken over. Ptolemy, for one, took over Egypt. Seleucus took the region of Mesopotamia and other districts once central to Persia, creating the Seleucid empire. Incorporating Greek infrastructure and administrators, Seleucus adopted Persia’s form of governance. With districts or satrapies headed by satraps (governors) beholden to a central government and ultimately the king, Parthia became one of those satrapies.² The Parthian satrapy was located east of the Caspian Sea. Thought to be related to the Scythians of central Asia, the nomadic Parni tribe eventually came to control Parthia. With the Seleucids weakened by

¹ Ian Worthington, *By the Spear: Phillip II, Alexander the Great, and the Rise and Fall of the Macedonian Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014) 32-38, 121-253.

² Wolfram Grajetzki, *Greeks and Parthians in Mesopotamia and Beyond, 331 BC-224 AD* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011) 5-6. Malcolm A. R. Colledge, *The Parthians* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967) 57.

internal war and conflict with the Ptolemies in the west, the Parni made their move from Parthia in the east.³ With Mithridates I conquering, and Mithridates II expanding and consolidating, the Parni (now called the Parthians) conquered much of the area once held by the Seleucid Greeks.



Most importantly - central to former Babylonian, Persian, and Seleucid interests - the Parthians took over the all-important fertile crescent area of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers known as Mesopotamia. But adding to their sphere of influence, at their western boundary the Parthians also took Armenia from Rome. In the east, they added the vassal kingdom of Characene. To the south, as part of their overall expansion, they took control of Elymais and the important city of Susa.⁴



Parthia's Conflict with Rome: A Stalemate

With Rome's indomitable desire to ever widen its reach, it was Parthia that stood in the way of Rome's eastern expansion. However, with superior tactics and strategy, Parthia was able to do more than hold its ground. With a unique hit and run

³ John D. Grainger, *Rome, Parthia, and India: The Violent Emergence of a New World Order, 150-140 BC* (South Yorkshire, England: Praetorian Press, 2013) 128-40.

⁴ Grajetzki, *Greeks and Parthians*, 9-12, 18-28.

fighting style, Parthia's tactics (including pretending retreat) were well suited to counter Rome's concentrated troop movements.⁵ With archers on the fleetest of horses,⁶ and camel riders providing a steady supply of arrows,⁷ they made sitting ducks of infantry unable to engage but at close range. When Rome's cavalry gave chase, the Parthians had an answer. So adept at their lethal craft, they developed the "Parthian shot." Able to shoot backward from the lap of a horse at full gallop, the Parthian archer delivered kill shots at pursuing cavalry. In this way, Parthian horse archers were able to come at enemy troops from all directions, creating confusion and wreaking havoc. Thus, the Parthians frustrated their enemies. Finally, their heavy armored horse cavalry (cataphracts) provided offensive support and assisted in mopping up remaining pockets of resistance with long lances and swords.



Parthian Horseman and Example of "The Parthian Shot" from the Hephthalite Bowl

Strategically, Parthia was also able to expand, then capitalize on Rome's other conflicts. It was during Rome's costly war with Carthage, between 264 and 146 BCE, when Hannibal did such damage on Roman soil, that Parthia's ascendancy began in 247. During the Gallic wars between 58 and 51 BCE Crassus invaded Parthia near Carrhae and was utterly defeated in 53. There the Roman standards were taken. A huge psychological blow for Rome.⁸ Mark Antony's subsequent invasion of Armenia, ended in Antony's retreat in 32 BCE. That left Armenia, a critical buffer state, in the hands of the Parthians.⁹ With a costly civil war just ended, when Augustus defeated Mark Antony at the Battle of Actium in 31, Rome was ready to sue for peace. Parthia thus proved it could not only win battles against Rome, it gained territory as well. Still, Rome did not come to the negotiating table with a weak hand. Because of Rome's substantial geographical presence and reputation that though it might lose battles, it won wars; it appears both sides realized little

⁵ Adrian Goldsworthy, *The Roman Army at War, 100 BC-AD 200* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996) 64.

⁶ Strabo, *Geography*, trans., Horace Leonard Jones, ed., Jeffrey Henderson (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1923) 3.4.15.

⁷ Plutarch, "Crassus" 24.1, in *Lives*, Dryden translation, ed. Arthur Hugh Clough (London: The Modern Library, 2001) 743; 742-45 for Parthian methods of warfare.

⁸ Rose Mary Sheldon, *Rome's Wars in Parthia: Blood in the Sand* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2010) 29-49, 82.

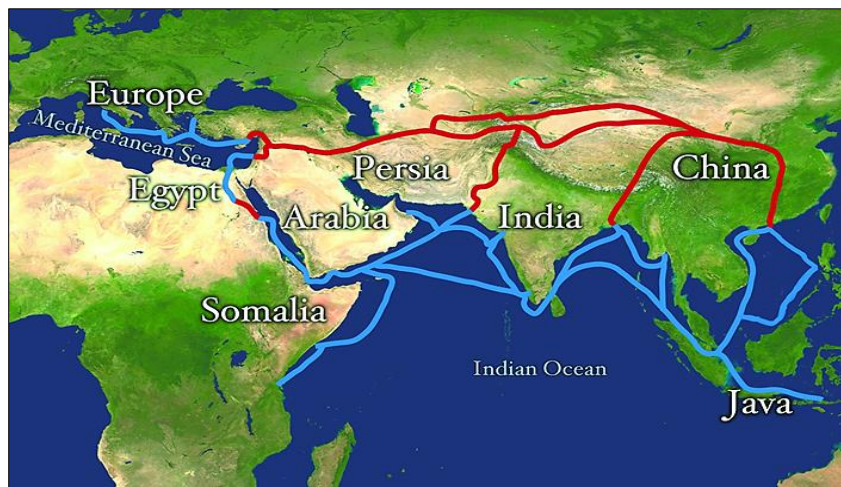
⁹ Raoul McLaughlin, *The Roman Empire and the Silk Routes: The Ancient World Economy and the Empires of Parthia, Central Asia and Han China* (Barnsley, England: Pen and Sword History, 2016) 163-67. Sheldon, *Rome's Wars*, 75-77

progress could be made against the other's sphere of influence. Therefore, to avoid a continuation of a conflict that would significantly weaken footholds already gained by each side, a treaty was made allowing Parthia to eye gains toward the east and Rome to increase and solidify gains made in the west. As Raoul McLaughlin aptly states, "In 20 BC Augustus secured a long-term peace agreement with the Parthian King Phraates IV. This agreement allowed both rulers to concentrate their military activities on other frontiers and thereby enlarge their respective empires."¹⁰

Parthia's Commercial Prowess

Considering Parthia's geographical presence and that it would be a longtime competitor of Rome in its own right, any study of ancient Middle Eastern economy during Roman times should take into consideration the possibility Rome's commercial expansion in the area was to counteract Parthian influence.¹¹ Parthia did indeed control the overland silk roads through Mesopotamia. As Richard Frye mentions,

The small states in the Fertile Crescent, which favored the decentralized 'feudal' form of government of Parthia, developed greatly as mercantile centers of international trade." The first two centuries of our era was an age of commerce, and the oasis states of the 'Fertile Crescent' flourished as never previously.¹²



The Silk Routes Rome and Parthia Came to Dominate

Rome's counteraction to Parthia's presence and jurisdiction of the silk routes through Mesopotamia was to control the southern east-west land routes through Arabia and sea routes by way of the Red Sea. From Rome's point of view, with the

¹⁰ Ibid., 181.

¹¹ Sheldon, *Rome's Wars in Parthia*, 2.

¹² Richard N. Frye, "Parthian and Sasanian History of Iran" in *Mesopotamia and Iran in the Parthian and Sasanian Periods: Rejection and Revival c. 238 BC-AD 642*, ed. John Curtis (London: British Museum Press, 2000) 18.

recent conquest of Egypt in 30 BCE and control of Anatolia nearly complete in 25 BCE - then with peace in 20 BCE, Rome could now expand its interests. But this time she would do it commercially. Rome sought to dominate the Eastern Mediterranean region with the help of client kings. Eyeing Egyptian and African markets and the crucial eastern trade routes through Arabia and the Red Sea, Rome had Herod the Great build the city of Caesarea on the southeastern coast of the Mediterranean in 20-10 BCE. Augustus then granted the vital city of Gaza (just south of Caesarea) to Herod. When Trajan took over Petra (inland, east from Gaza and Caesarea) in 106 CE, Rome now not only controlled Gaza's markets but it captured lucrative eastern trade flows through Petra with its location en route to Gaza. As Gary Young points out, incense was carried from Petra by road to Gaza.¹³ By establishing Caesarea and owning Petra, and Gaza with its diverse markets, Rome was in a position to not only dominate Mediterranean commerce and eastern trade flows, but overland trade to consumer cities in the southeastern Mediterranean region, like Bostra, Samaria, and Jerusalem.

For Parthia, the development of trade with the east started with the infrastructure they inherited from the Seleucids. It wisely preserved the cities, lands, and roads it received. Their possession of Armenia adjacent to the Black Sea and control of Hyrcania and the Caspian Sea gave them access to Central Asian markets. Their takeover of Persis and cities like Antioch-in-Persis on the Persian Gulf meant access to Indian markets by way of water. Their control of Elymais and the politically important city of Susa, and the fertile region of Media and its wealthy city Ecbatana would have enriched the Parthians culturally and materially. But one of Parthia's most prized possessions would have been the Royal Road. Running east and west through Mesopotamia, this highway solidified Parthia's position as an international trader. With it came Ctesiphon, Bagdad and Seleucia as gateways to the west. Then stretching east to include Bactria, a neighbor of India, access to eastern markets were now direct and lucrative.¹⁴ Finally, trade with China was a real possibility. According to Wang Tao, "We now know that, as early as the third millennium BCE, a network [of roads] already existed in the Eurasian steppe land, stretching from the Caspian Sea in the west, to the Tarim Basin in the east."¹⁵ With the expansionist policy of the Han dynasty, contact with the west was made. According to Chinese chroniclers, a visit with Parthia by Chinese envoys happened in 115 BCE. The exchange of token trade items between the Parthian king and the Chinese representatives may have set a precedent for broader trade deals in the future.¹⁶ We do know remains at a Parthian tomb at Palmyra, erected during the first three centuries CE, were covered with costly clothing from China and India.¹⁷ Either way, because of its rich possessions, Parthia would successfully compete commercially (like it did militarily) with Rome, in its region of the world.

¹³ Gary K. Young, *Rome's Eastern Trade: International Commerce and Imperial Policy 31 BC-AD 305* (New York: Routledge, 2001) 92, 97.

¹⁴ Grainger, *Rome, Parthia and India*, 128-135.

¹⁵ Wang Tao, "Parthia in China: A Reexamination of the Historical Records" in *The Age of the Parthians*; eds. Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis and Sarah Stewart (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007) 87.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁷ Colledge, *Parthians*, 113-14.

Parthian Architecture, Art, Dress, and Religion

Because of their empire's location, and their origins in Central Asia, the Parthians had as their source, a wide range of influences when it came to art and architecture. Daryoosh Akbarzadeh describes Parthia in this way:

Archaeological evidence testifies to the greatness of the culture and art of the Parthian era. The cultural heritage associated with this era has been discovered over a vast expanse, from the borders of China and Central Asia, all the way to Mesopotamia and Syria in the west.¹⁸

Some scholars have surmised Parthia's departure from Hellenistic influences was because of its competition with Rome. Either way, different from the Seleucid Greeks, the Parthians developed their own unique artistic and architectural style. Borrowing from the east and west, theirs was an amalgam easily identified as "Parthian." Their architecture and art employed interesting circular and frontal motifs. Architecturally, the Parthians of course left in place existing structures that under the Seleucid Greeks naturally copied the Hellenistic rectangular layout with colonnaded and triangular features famously known and still reproduced in the west today. But where it could, the Parthians sought to be different. On entrance to a Greek or Roman temple, one passes through a portico of columns. Entering the Parthian temple at Hatra, one arrives under the eye of graceful arches. The blend of Greek-style columns and triangular pediments with multiple Parthian arches at Hatra gives the temple its unique curbside appeal. At Parthian Assur, the use of Parthian arches is again prominently featured.



Greek Temple Compared to the Parthian Temple at Hatra

But the use of circularity as an architectural feature during the Parthian period is pronounced in other ways. Reminiscent of the absolute circular Chorasmanian fortress at Koi Krylgan Kala (400 BCE - 400 CE) east of the Caspian Sea, whole Parthian towns and fortresses were also laid out in circular fashion. Comparing Seleucid and Persian rectangular planning to some Parthian sites, Malcolm Colledge says, while,

¹⁸ Daryoosh Akbarzadeh, "Parthian Studies: Two New Notes" in *The Parthian and Early Sasanian Empires: Adaptation and Expansion*, ed. Vesta Sarkhosh, et al. (Oxford: British Institute of Persian Studies, Oxbow Books, 2016) 76.

“A very different approach to planning was represented by the vaguely circular shape of several cities under Parthian control or influence, the Parthian re-foundation of Ctesiphon, and the ramparts around Carrhai, Takht-I Suleiman and Hatra of about the first century A.D. were more closely and deliberately, circular.”¹⁹

At Nisa, their original capital, the Parthians again chose circularity as a prominent architectural feature. There, Parthian architects built a dome that commanded the city’s skyline view. Unlike Roman domes that sat on top of supporting structures, the walls of Nisa’s dome ran to the ground. A surrounding square edifice contained the outward thrust of the dome's walls.²⁰ The Central Asian influence again may have come from Chorasmia. Comparing the circular mausoleum structures at the Chorasmian necropolis of Tagisken to the Round Hall of Nisa, Antonio Invernizzi states, “The above structures share with the Round Hall the layout of the inner structure - a circle in a square perimeter - and the building technique based on centric elements. With comparable dimensions, the orientation of the buildings is roughly similar and, finally, the function of the buildings is comparable in a more general sense: funerary at Tagisken, commemorative of ancestors at Nisa.”²¹



Parthian Round Hall at Nisa

That the Parthian empire lasted five-hundred years is a testament to Parthia's distinct cultural heritage. When we think of Egyptian, Greek, Persian, or Roman empires, unique types of architecture, art, dress, and religion come to mind. Thus, though it is military accomplishment that establishes an empire, it is distinct cultural dimensions that maintain it. While the Parthians took over a Greek empire from the Seleucids, who wisely left vestiges of Persian art, architecture, and administration in place, the Parthians found a way to establish their own unique "Parthian" styles, often an amalgam of Greek and Asian influences. While Parthian architecture uniquely incorporated elements of circularity, their art would include the motif of frontality. In comparison, where Egyptian and Persian figures make statements of

¹⁹ Malcolm A. R. Colledge, *Parthian Art*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977) 31, 34.

²⁰ Antonio Invernizzi, “A Note on Architectural Traditions in Arsacid Parthia: The Round Hall at Nisa” in *The Parthian and Early Sasanian Empires: Adaptations and Expansion*, ed. Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis, et al. (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2016) 83-89.

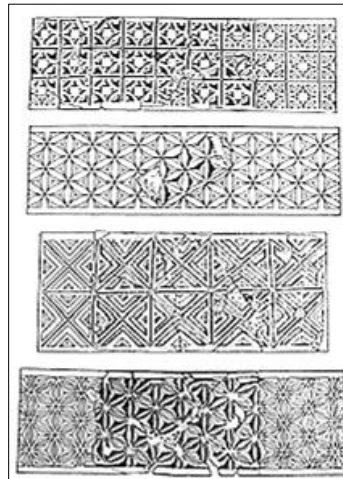
²¹ *Ibid.*, 86-87

power, Greek and Roman models appear meditative or interactive, looking away at someone or some-thing. However, the Parthian's interaction is directly with the viewer. A style the Byzantines would later adopt, Parthian models look straight ahead, making a personal connection between themselves and the viewer. Another distinction is that Parthians often drop the more sober countenance of the Greeks and Romans. Deepening the direct relationship between subject and viewer, some figures appear almost friendly.



Parthian Frontality and Appearance of Friendliness

Moreover, besides the creative fabrication of precious metal jewelry; bronze, terracotta and stone figures; decorated interior walls are again testament to Parthian artistic choice and creativity. Wall surfaces at Assur were beautifully adorned with tooled stucco using geometric and floral patterns. These decorations would have brightened any room with the application of complimenting and contrasting colors.²²



Decorative Stucco at Assur

²² Colledge, *Parthians*, 134-36.

Although the Parthians in some ways were liberal in their varietal use of artistic and architectural styles, when it came to dress, greater uniformity was the norm, at least among the ruling class.



Examples of Parthian Dress

Coinciding with the empire's height of power, by the end of the first century BCE, the belted tunic and trouser-suit became popular throughout the empire. Loose fitted clothing with multiple horizontal pleats, sometimes in exaggerated fashion, became the rave. Sporting long mustaches, often with closely groomed beards, the personal appearance of Parthian nobles included a puffed hairstyle of moderate length secured with a headband.²³ Knowing who the rulers were by their outfit would have been essential over a vast realm of varied faiths and cultures. Since choosing one belief over others might have caused rebellion, the diversity of religions within their realm accentuated the need for uniformity of dress by the Parthian governors.

Therefore, an understanding of Parthian society might best be viewed as a combination of military dominance with religious tolerance. Though the Seleucids adhered to a pantheon of human-like gods with their less than all-powerful head god, Zeus, they left other belief systems undisturbed. In its conquering of Seleucia, the Parthians would do something similar. Wisely they left able Greek administrators and their religious practices alone. As we have mentioned the Seleucids would also leave Persia's political structure of satraps in charge of satrapies intact. But the Parthians would do something different. An ingenious advent to their political structure was to increase the number of districts under their jurisdiction. Seeing what they and others had done to successfully subvert Seleucid rule, Parthian rulers subdivided the satrapies into smaller eparchies. That reduced the geographical area any one person had control over, and diluted any future attempt to gather large scale rebellion. Thus, for the Parthians, the reduction of satrap control under incomparable

²³ Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis, "Parthian Culture and Costume" in *Mesopotamia and Iran in the Parthian and Sasanian Periods: Rejection and Revival*, c. 238 BC-AD 642, ed. John Curtis (London: British Museum Press, 2000) 26-34.

military dominance combined with religious tolerance made for successful long-term hegemony over a wide range of geographical area and beliefs.²⁴

One of the belief systems that remained intact from Persia through Seleucid and Parthian rule was Zoroastrianism. Probably from eastern Persia, its founder, Zoroaster, was at first a priest of a polytheistic system of belief. As part of his duties he practiced animal sacrifice to gods ruled by the head god Ahura Mazda. When Zoroaster became disgusted with animal sacrifice, a bright celestial being sent from Ahura Mazda appeared to him by a river, offering a better way. The priests were worshipping false gods. There was only one god, the wise uncreated one, Ahura Mazda. Embracing a theology of good versus evil, followers were to lead a life of basic goodness: thinking good thoughts, saying good words, and doing good deeds. Abandoning animal sacrifice Zoroastrians lit altars of fire that were to be kept ablaze continuously. The symbolism of fire represented a cleansing and purity. Fire which gave light to a dark world, symbolized Ahura Mazda himself - but as well, his followers were to strive to have illuminated minds.²⁵ But though the good versus evil dualism of Zoroastrianism was prevalent in Parthia, the veneration of the elements - rivers, lakes, wells, trees, the sea and stones - were still revered in western Parthia. The Seleucids being Greeks, had their pantheon of gods. And though Babylonians still venerated the fertility gods Ishtar and Bel, an enclave of Jews in Mesopotamia worshipped Yahweh. Where sun and moon gods were venerated at Hatra, Christians east of the Tigris gained footing toward the end of the Parthian period.²⁶ What the Parthian rulers themselves believed is impossible to know, but it is evident as overlords, though they may or may not have participated in the worship of the people they ruled over, they at least were tolerant - a key to their having ruled for five-hundred years.

Biographical Note

Patrick Scott Smith is a business owner, writer and independent scholar. Besides his anthropologically based studies, he has presented research on the Herod's Harbor project at different venues for the ASOR and ASSR in the Central, Southwest and Southeast regions. A member of the ASSR and Missouri Academy of Science with presented social-scientific views to those associations, he also writes for the Ancient History Encyclopedia online, with three approved proposals for 2020.

Bibliography

Akbarzadeh, D. "Parthian Studies: Two New Notes" in *The Parthian and Early Sasanian Empires: Adaptation and Expansion*. (Oxbow Books, 2016).

Colledge, M.A.R. *The Parthians*. (Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1967).

Colledge, M.A.R. *Parthian Art*. (Cornell University Press, 1977).

²⁴ See this author's work, *Parthia Empire*, (Ancient History Encyclopedia, [https://www.ancient.eu/Parthia_\(Empire\)/](https://www.ancient.eu/Parthia_(Empire)/)) 2019.

²⁵ Joshua Mark, *Zoroastrianism*, (Ancient History Encyclopedia, <https://www.ancient.eu/Zoroastrianism/>) 2019.

²⁶ Colledge, *Parthians*, 98-108, 158.

Curtis, V.S. "Parthian Culture and Costume" in *Mesopotamia and Iran in the Parthian and Sasanian Periods: Rejection and Revival*, c. 238 BC-AD 642. (British Museum Press, 2000).

Frye, R.N. "Parthian and Sasanian History of Iran" in *Mesopotamia and Iran in the Parthian and Sasanian Periods: Rejection and Revival* c. 238 BC-AD 642. (British Museum Press, 2000).

Goldsworthy, A. *The Roman Army at War, 100 BC-AD 200*. (Clarendon Press, 1996).

Grainger, J.D. *Rome, Parthia, and India: The Violent Emergence of a New World Order, 150-140 BC*. (Praetorian Press, 2013).

Grajetzki, W. *Greeks and Parthians in Mesopotamia and Beyond, 331 BC-224 AD*. (Bristol Classical Press, 2011).

Invernizzi, A. "A Note on Architectural Traditions in Arsacid Parthia: The Round Hall at Nisa" in *The Parthian and Early Sasanian Empires: Adaptations and Expansion*. (Oxbow Books, 2016).

Mark, Joshua. *Zoroastrianism*. (Ancient History Encyclopedia, <https://www.ancient.eu./zoroastrianism/> 2019)

McLaughlin, R. *The Roman Empire and the Silk Routes: The Ancient World Economy and the Empires of Parthia, Central Asia and Han China*. (Pen and Sword History, 2016).

Plutarch. "Crassus" in *Lives*. (The Modern Library, 2001).

Sheldon, R.M. *Rome's Wars in Parthia: Blood in the Sand*. (Valentine Mitchell, 2010).

Smith, Patrick Scott. *Parthian Empire*. (Ancient History Encyclopedia, [https://www.ancient.eu/Parthia_\(Empire\)/](https://www.ancient.eu/Parthia_(Empire)/). 2019).

Strabo, *Geography*. (Harvard University Press, 1923).

Tao, W. "Parthia in China: A Reexamination of the Historical Records" in *The Age of the Parthians*. (I. B. Tauris, 2007).

Worthington, I. *By the Spear: Phillip II, Alexander the Great, and the Rise and Fall of the Macedonian Empire*. (Oxford University Press, 2014).

Young, G.K. *Rome's Eastern Trade: International Commerce and Imperial Policy 31 BC-AD 305*. (Routledge, 2001).

Communities, Loyalties, and Churches

Elizabeth Kanon
Texas State University

Ben Craver
Wayland Baptist University—San Antonio

Abstract

This essay¹ seeks to reflect religion in transition by investigating a new, modern religion which calls itself Way of the Future Church (WOTF). WOTF springs out of human secularism yet seeks to incorporate a strong artificial intelligent god (SAI-godhead). The most common reason given by people engaged in any religion is that one is accepted into a larger community from which the individual draws meaning for her life. Initially, this essay invokes Josiah Royce's conception of community in order to provide a conceptual analysis of spiritual and beloved communities. By comparing and contrasting Christianity to WOTF, this essay will demonstrate that WOTF does not meet the highest expectation of a beloved community, engendering "loyalty to loyalty." The essay concludes by addressing objections received from an anonymous objector. The commonalities and distinguishing features of these two religions demonstrate that the individual choosing WOTF as a religion may find meaning in a spiritual community but cannot engage in a *beloved* community as described by Royce, whereas a Christian member can.

Royce's Communities

"The true lover of religion needs a conscience, as well as a joy in living—a coherent plan of action as well as a vital impulse"
(Royce 1913, pp. 3-4).

Josiah Royce (1911) acknowledges "conflicting forms" of religion and notes that all religions have an underlying mutual agreement and motive. He identifies the duty of religion to make the individual aware of the "consciousness of the ideal life" and to offer salvation from the mundanity of actual living (p. 41). He proposes that "our natural life as it is, in all its pathetic and needy fallibility" gives rise to our "stubborn quest for the superhuman." (p. 42) Given our inability to overcome our natural existence, we seek insight in the supernatural or spiritual realm. Such insight can only be accomplished through a social experience; as individuals, we do not directly experience the divine (Royce 1913, 252; 1911, xxxvii). Hence, for Royce (1911) religion is a purely social behavior, which "seems right, in searching for a way that may lead to salvation, to get such help as we can by looking to our normal social experience for whatever guidance it can give" (p. 55).

This is not an essay demonstrating the influence of Royce's philosophy; instead, it merely borrows a few tangible ideas regarding the nature of spiritual/religious² communities and the importance of Royce's ideal community trait that of establishing

¹ This essay is part two of a three-part project entitled "Are You Persuaded to Worship an AI-Godhead?" investigating Way of the Future Church's designation as a religion.

² These terms are used synonymously throughout.

loyalty to loyalty; i.e., a beloved community. Royce (1911) provides a working definition of a religious community: 1) a shared experience between like-minded individuals (p. 39), 2) offering insight into salvation by providing meaning to one's life (p. 38) and 3) engendering values particularly the value of loyalty to one's ideals (p. 208). Mark Graves (2018) emphasizes Royce's further ideal--*beloved* community--be distinguished by the feature of establishing a "loyalty to loyalty" among its member (p. 10). This loyalty to loyalty ought to engender tolerance for diverse religious approaches.

Royce (1913) demarcates religions as offering a doctrine of life; attempts to make life meaningful often by establishing God's relation to the world and the individuals within it (pp. 10-11). Comparing WOTF to Christianity we see similarities between the two religions regarding the ability to provide a *spiritual* community, but a vast difference when called upon to culminate into a *beloved* one. Hence, the concern that WOTF followers may be intolerant of non-WOTF followers. Given WOTF's stated goal of submitting all to the SAI-godhead, this suggests that those not abdicating to SAI will not be tolerated.

Criterion One

Both Christianity and WOTF offer a shared experience between like-minded individuals. For Christianity, the experience is rooted in a personal relationship between God and persons who belong to a community that he created. This community is predicated upon New Testament texts which disclose essentials through assorted images. The church is described variously in corporate terms as a "kingdom" (Matthew 6:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:12, English Standard Version [ESV]), a "nation" (1 Peter 2:9, ESV), a "temple" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, ESV), and a "body" (Romans 12:4-5, ESV). Each of these images underscores the reality of the Christian community. The church is, however, both corporate and individual. It focuses on God and consists of individuals who have declared their loyalty to God in a shared experience of the divine.

WOTF proposes a community to create SAI-godhead and then allow this deity to sustain it. This is established when it is stated "everyone should help" to create "super-intelligence" (wayofthefuture 2018). Anthony Levandowski, as reported by Harris (2017), offers further credibility to providing a "shared experience" when he states, "The idea needs to spread before the technology. . . [t]he church is how we spread the word, the gospel. If you believe [in it], start a conversation with someone else and help them understand the same things."

Criterion Two

Christianity and WOTF seek to offer their members meaning and salvation. Christianity not only offers insight into salvation by providing meaning to one's life, it instantiates salvation in individual and community dimensions. Salvation is depicted in the Christian Scriptures through a trinitarian dynamic. It is an individual response

to God, facilitated by one's acceptance of the Christian gospel as defined by the Christ-event, and transpiring in the context of the existing Christian community by God's Spirit. While Royce (1913) would see loyalty not in terms of the Christ-event, what he calls "traditional Christology" (p. 429), Christianity, as defined in the New Testament, calls for personal commitment to God as the essential component of Christianity. The salvific criterion in Christianity, however, is loyalty to—or more specifically—*faith in* Jesus Christ, the Son of God; "for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith" (Galatians 3:26, ESV).

But, while personal commitment to Christ constitutes the core of Christianity, individual salvation always presupposes a corporate context. The individual is expected to express the inward element of loyalty or faith in outward rituals, primarily Christian baptism, which constitutes visible entrance into the community. The Scriptures, as noted above, defines the community through a number of images. The primary image is church. For Christians, meaning emerges only within this community. The church is primarily a missional organization to propagate the Christian message (Grenz 2000). The missional task of the church emphasizes its existence as a *spiritual*, rather than an *organizational* community. Meaning emerges primarily from the community's missional task. The missional task has an epistemological aim—to proclaim the message of Christianity to others who are not members of the community (1 Peter 2:9, ESV). Finally, meaning emerges within the community as the people of God gathered for worship and reciprocally-motivated good works (Hebrews 10:23-25, ESV). Thus, the spiritual community of Royce springs to life within the Christian community as it instantiates salvation through the Christian gospel and provides authentic meaning to one's life.

WOTF suggests an installation of SAI-godhead will provide meaning to an individual's mundane existence and salvation by saving humanity from itself. The community is encouraged to "help to create" such a force. WOTF is quick to point out that not everyone will need to be programmers or financiers; it is inferred that the rest merely need the proper mindset to encourage R&D of the "super-intelligence" to make way for the SAI-godhead.

A problem occurs due to vagueness of what each member must do in order to achieve SAI-godhead, thus undermining life's meaningfulness since all one must do is not stand in the way of research and development, and occasionally speak up in favor of it. This making way is further emphasized by the importance "for the machines to see who is friendly" (wayofthefuture 2018). Thus, it is also a missional religion. Yet, one may argue that for many religions, passive endorsement of the communities' ideals is all that is required. That observation seems to overlook the fact that most religions offer ritual and expect daily prayer on behalf of the individual in order for salvation and meaning to occur. WOTF does not currently have such ritual but may provide it through offering, ". . . its own gospel called 'The Manual,' public worship ceremonies, and probably a physical place of worship" (Harris 2017). Levandowski states that the church "plans to conduct workshops and educational programs throughout the San Francisco/Bay Area beginning this year [2017]" (Harris

2017). WOTF claims to offer salvation in a tangible way, arguing that we will be the creators of the SAI-godhead, who will then take care of our needs. Levandowski states, “Way of the Future. . . will promote the use of divine AI for the “betterment of society” and “decrease fear of the unknown” (Harris 2017), perhaps keeping at bay the inevitable decline of the human species or perhaps by allowing the human species to evolve into the vastly superior SAI form. Thus, life will change its meaning as we all become simulations within a complex computer program and immortality will be established.³ WOTF offers salvation, since computers will operate and control everything more efficiently and nobly than humans. All basic needs are met through robotic labor and humans need only pursue intellectual desires. Granted, somehow WOTF must establish how we will become the ideal humans, which never revert to baser instincts of aggression and domination. WOTF must convince us that everyone will be fulfilled in such a life-style. Humans who do not have the intellectual acumen to set their own projects will most likely be evolved out of the species over time.

Criterion Three

A spiritual community ought to provide a value system. Christianity engenders values, particularly the value of loyalty to one’s ideals. Christian virtues can be summed up in the statement that “whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them” (see Matthew 7:12, ESV). This suggests a strong commitment to tolerance.

WOTF vaguely identifies values for its members. Given the religion is newly formed, values must be inferred from brief communiqués dispersed by Levandowski. “Progress,” “change,” and “personal involvement” are the values derived. One might also include “patience.” These virtues are culled from WOTF’s website. What is notably missing—tolerance. This becomes apparent when Levandowski indicates his plan to keep a record of “who is not” friendly to his cause (wayofthefuture 2018). This apparent intolerance shows that WOTF fails as a basis for Royce’s *beloved* community and why Christianity’s commitment to tolerance was viewed by Royce as providing a good foundation for such.

Beloved Community

The virtue of “loyalty to loyalty” must be understood to demonstrate why Christianity is an example of such a community and why WOTF falls short. By “loyalty” Royce means a commitment to a shared cause to “fulfill the community’s intended aim” (Parker 2018). Further, a beloved community must become more inclusive with

³ We are borrowing from Frank Tipler’s argument that is summarized by Martin Gardner (2008) as: “[in] *The Physics of Immortality* . . . Tipler argued that anyone who understands modern physics will be compelled to believe that at a far-off future date . . . God will resurrect every person who lived, as well as every person who could have lived! Our brains will be preserved as computer simulations and given new spiritual bodies to live happily forever in the paradise described in the New Testament.” (p. 57) Gardner offers this in his review of Tipler’s *The Physics of Christianity*. While Tipler is not on record for supporting SAI-godhead, he is currently a Catholic, his view certainly is compatible with it.

critical analysis of itself at every level (Parker 2018). He acknowledges that some (if not many) fail to reach this ideal remaining cliquish, dogmatic, self-interested and exclusionary to other communities (Parker 2018).

Graves (2018) concisely delineated Royce's concept of loyalty to loyalty, noting a fundamental attribute of loyalty is a *commitment to respecting commitment* in others. One need not have the same belief system or share in one's own community in order to receive this respect. It is enough to demonstrate a loyalty to something that *ought* to be respected. However, some causes are not worthy of loyalty. Such causes will have the nature of undermining loyalty itself through bringing about disharmony, or by being loyal to falsehoods. It is important to note that Graves (2018) allows for SAI to be members of a beloved community if it can be established that SAI can share human values and the vision of a beloved community distinguished by mutual flourishing (p. 10). It is that reifying of a SAI to godhead, which is not a necessary implication of Graves' position.

For Royce (1908), "loyalty to loyalty" is an overarching ethical framework (Kleinig 2017), not a theological construct. Loyalty is individualistic and predicated upon one's own "special personal system of causes" (p. 201). Though the possibilities seem to be endless, Royce lays down a rather utilitarian-sounding principle: "Be loyal to loyalty, that is, do what you can to produce a maximum of the devoted service of causes, a maximum of fidelity, and of selves that choose and serve fitting objects of loyalty" (p. 201).

There are vibrant similarities and blatant disparities between faith within the Christian church and loyalty within Royce's various communities. To begin with, loyalty as "respect" is a characteristic Christianity would embrace. The word for "respect" in 21 New Testament texts is often translated as "fear." St. Paul admonishes Christians, "Pay to all what is owed to them. . . *respect* to whom *respect* is owed. . . ." (Romans 13:7, ESV). The application is more than internal; it reflects an attitude toward any person. St. Peter, too, urges Christians to be "prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and *respect*" (1 Peter 3:15, ESV). Thus, respect for other's beliefs is an attribute which two prominent leaders of the early church required. Attributes, however, relate to right-being. Respect as described here is ethical; it is about right-doing, behavior, actions toward others. It clearly parallels Royce's (1913) concept of the church as an historically-conditioned entity within a philosophical form of idealism (p. 423). Christianity demonstrates loyalty to loyalty, but never flawlessly.

However, as noted above, some causes are not worthy of loyalty. Reflect on "the complicated case of a loyal Nazi. who may be the consummate husband and father but, at the same time, a tormentor of Jews" (Kleinig 2017). The Nazi cause undermined loyalty through its blatant disregard of human and institutional respect, evidenced by worldwide disharmony (= war), and untold numbers influenced, even required, to be loyal to falsehoods. Christianity would seek to undermine this kind of loyalty. For example, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German Lutheran pastor, paid the ultimate price for his resistance in 1945. His ethics demanded uncompromising personal and

community action when confronting the evils of Nazism. He resisted the position of German Evangelical Church's, which embraced the ideological principles of Nazism. In 1934, 2,000 Lutheran pastors formed the opposition Confessing Church. Bonhoeffer served as head of their seminary at Finkenwalde until shuttered by the Nazis in 1937. By 1940, Bonhoeffer was drawn into active resistance. He was a courier and diplomat to the British government and a key partner in the conspiracy to assassinate Hitler and overthrow the Third Reich. Although executed, Bonhoeffer's life and ethics illustrate that a "responsible person is, thus, a selfless person, who does God's will by serving the spiritual and material needs of another" (Huff 2018).

On the other hand, Christianity seeks to avoid disharmony and falsehoods. At its highest and best, Christianity endorses unity and truth. St. Paul emphasized these characteristics to the churches he established.⁴ It would be wrongheaded to argue that early Christianity was unified and truthful. In fact, many of the local churches to whom Paul wrote were "rocked with disunity . . . factions, schisms, false teachings, and personality 'cults'" (Capes et al 2017, 405). Do disunity and false teachings disqualify the ancient and contemporary church as an institution crowned by loyalty? Not at all. Despite the ongoing, fully human controversies in every local manifestation of the church since its founding, the Pauline message is emphatically clear (Capes et al 2017): ". . . walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:1-4, ESV).

WOTF states in its beliefs that it is interested in bringing about mutual flourishing under the SAI-godhead, which seems like a feature of a beloved community. However, WOTF suggests that it is willing to establish disharmony when it claims its community is making note of who is for the creation of SAI and who is against it. It sets up an exclusionary nature by making a list of who supported the SAI-godhead and who did not—a sign of not respecting others' commitments or loyalties. This suggests that WOTF community knowingly intends to be cliquish. Thus, they do not demonstrate Royce's key feature of "loyalty to loyalty."

The veiled threat of "we will know who you are" to its detractors is disturbing. It is a bit vague regarding what will be done with this information; if nothing, then why do you need to know? It seems to disregard the need for critical analysis of its belief system and goal. To question the feasibility or possibility of SAI-godhead is to be one "who is not". Repeatedly, Royce charges community members to test for dogma at every level. WOTF does not indicate a tolerance for anyone questioning its belief system. Further, WOTF may be postulating a falsehood by claiming it *can* build and

⁴ Royce (1913) stops short of declaring Paul as the founder of Christianity (p. 338). However, his work in establishing a number of early Christian churches produces a vital "spirit" which for Royce is "the true founder of Christianity" (p. 338). Thus, Royce wrongly subordinates Christ, the namesake for and rightful founder of Christianity, to the church for which Christ atoned.

institute SAI-godhead. These concerns undermine WOTF being a candidate for a beloved community.

Objections⁵ and Replies

Objection One - The critique of WOTF's lack of communal mission and the meaningfulness it provides perhaps makes too extreme a contrast with Christian communities. This essay acknowledges WOTF is in the process of developing the essential features and mission of its community. Moreover, it could very well involve the kind of focus and coherence achieved through a proselytizing mission that this essay makes so much of in terms of favoring Christianity. For instance, the baleful consequences of ending up on the naughty, rather than the nice, list of our hypothetical future AI overlords, coupled with a modicum of benevolent orientation toward our fellow human beings, makes for a powerful motivator to proselytization. Frankly, this seems to be the structural and functional equivalent of the greatest motivational force in Christian proselytization over the last 2,000 years.

Reply – This objection is concerned with WOTF being characterized as not meeting Royce's Criterion Three *sharing one's ideals*. It points out a weakness in the essay as *sharing* was not addressed. Instead Criterion Three discussed *having* values and not *sharing* them. It must be admitted that any belief system can meet the sharing of its values, the concern is whether or not the values are worthy of being shared. With Royce's emphasis upon loyalty and what this word entails within his view; WOTF seems to lack two central features—harmony and truth. WOTF suggests disharmony by demarcating believers from non-believers and borders upon untruthfulness in its belief that humans can actually create SAI-godhead.

The objector notes in later objections that Christianity is guilty of disharmony and perhaps untruthfulness. Disharmony due to centuries of religious wars and untruthfulness due to its basic tenant God must be accepted upon faith. WOTF has no history of violent conflict. Further, it seems if Christianity can have a faith-based God, why cannot WOTF have a similar faith-based SAI-godhead? The first concern is addressed below while addressing other objections. The more compelling problem of this first objection is the leap of faith both communities must make regarding their perception of what is to be worshipped. The divinity of SAI-godhead is addressed in part three of "Are You Persuaded to Worship an AI-Godhead?" an unpublished paper at this time. Space does not permit full coverage of this concern, but a quick summary may suffice here. Gods are usually conceived as supernatural, SAI-godhead would be natural. Thus, WOTF's religion is best described as a type of primitive totemism. Similar to early religions which worshiped natural objects raised to the level of sacred by mutual agreement and enculturation. Simply stated, sacred does not constitute being divine. Hence, SAI-godhead may be sacred, but it does not reach the level of divinity currently conceived. This makes WOTF more tenable for those who only want a step of faith rather than a leap. But for others the lack of a

⁵ Anonymous Review provided these relevant objections to our argument.

divine supernatural being may make acceptance of WOTF as a modern religion untenable.

Objection Two - Claims in favor of loyalty to loyalty, and the tolerance this is taken to imply, as the greatest bond of community is implausible. It seems that fear, hatred, and scorn of those with different loyalties has been the one of the primary bonds of human society since its beginning—including high civilizations such as that of Classical Greece, and enormous and long-lived empires, such as that of Classical Rome or the great Chinese empires.

Reply – This objection appears to be equivocating upon the word ‘community’. In the sense of Royce’s ‘community’ the scope of is of a ‘spiritual community’. The objection has broadened the scope to mean ‘society’ or ‘culture’. However, even in the narrow scope of *religious* community, intolerance of different spiritual communities is a reality. This fact does not undermine the *ideal* of a *beloved* community that Royce sought to instill. The difference between Christianity and WOTF is that Christianity in its teachings attempts to embrace the ideal, even while falling short; whereas, WOTF negates the ideal with its exclusionary precepts regarding who is for and who is against SAI-godhead.

Objection Three - The claim that practices of Christianity are a prime example of loyalty to loyalty—and the tolerance that this supposedly entails—is utterly unrealistic. The wars of religion in 16th and 17th Century Europe, the violent suppression of heresy and religious descent from the dawn of Christianity, the persecution and political exclusion of Catholics and dissenting protestants in protestant nations as well as the reciprocal treatment of all stripes of Protestantism in Catholic nations, the Crusades, the suppression of indigenous religions and the destruction of their cultural products, and so on ... are not minor features of Christian history. The idea of a community of denominations in a sort of neutral marketplace of religious communities is very much a 20th Century American idea (at least as extended to Catholics, the idea took root earlier as between some protestant communities taken to be of the right sort).

Reply – While similar to the earlier objection, this one offers specific examples which cannot be overlooked and appeals to *ideals* sound hollow up against such facts. Both Christianity and WOTF can claim a need to be allowed a chance to “grow up”. If Christianity took centuries to reach our current pluralistic acceptance of other religions, then so too must WOTF be allowed to mature to accept dissident voices within and without its community. Thus, while in its current stage WOTF may not reflect Royce’s ideal in its teachings, given time it may do so. Jesus is said to advocate toleration with his acknowledgment that one must abide by the rules of one’s culture with his statement: “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” (John 8:7, ESV) Or one may consider a later interpretation of his teachings: “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean.” (Acts 10:28, ESV). Non-violence is found in his

stricture to “turn the other cheek” when one is physically/spiritually harmed by another. The difference is that Christianity *at its conception* taught toleration and non-violence, we do not see such ideal beginnings in the WOTF dissemination of its teachings.

The objector is correct in recalling the moral inconsistencies found across Christian history. However, the objector fails to enumerate the enormous good that Christianity has accomplished as well. Hospitals and mobile clinics, residences for children without parents and seniors, institutions of higher learning, organizations who care for the poor and hungry and those suffering injustices, those which spring into action when disaster strikes, not to mention classic works of art and music. Some of the most notable and caring organizations in world history have roots in Christian loyalty: the Salvation Army, World Vision, the Red Cross, Focus on the Family, Compassion International, Feed the Children, Mission without Borders, and Habitat for Humanity, represent only a few. The objector exhibits a shameless ignorance of the totality of Christian ethical history, or perhaps a calculated disposition against it.

Objection Four - Why would one be loyal to loyalty if the loyalty of another was a route to damnation? It seems that disrupting such loyalties would be a driving mission for those concerned with the eternal souls of their fellow man.

Reply – This concern was addressed briefly in the section where the essay noted that some causes are not worthy of loyalty. To reiterate, loyalty to loyalty requires that the loyalty be grounded in harmony and truth. Loyalty to disharmony and/or untruth is no longer true loyalty and one may disrupt such. Albeit, Christians may only do so with non-violence.

Concern for the “eternal souls of their fellow man,” is indeed a “driving mission” for Christianity and its loyal adherents. The act of disruption, however, is undertaken with words, not weapons. The message of Christian faith is grounded in truth. The truth in this instance is not established solely in propositions to be presented; rather, the truth is objectified in the person of Jesus, who stated: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6, ESV).

Conclusion

By delineating criteria for characterizing spiritual communities, this essay demonstrates that WOTF, like Christianity, can offer a spiritual community for like-minded individuals by providing meaning and salvation. However, the task of identifying and encouraging virtues is best met by Christianity, as WOTF is vague on this subject and fails to ground tolerance. It is this failure, which ultimately causes WOTF to fail as a basis for Royce’s beloved community, since it cannot guarantee “loyalty to loyalty.”

Biographical Notes

Elizabeth P. Kanon is Lecturer in Philosophy at Texas State University in San Marcos.

Ben D. Craver is Professor of Christian Studies at Wayland Baptist University in San Antonio.

References

Capes, David; Rodney Reeves, and E. Randolph Richards. *Rediscovering Paul: An Introduction to His World, Letters, and Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017.

Gardner, Mark. "The Strange Case of Frank Jennings Tipler." *Skeptical Inquirer*. Vol. 32. No. 2. March/April 2008. pp. 57-58. https://www.csicop.org/si/show/the_strange_case_of_frank_jennings_tipler accessed May 24, 2019.

Graves, Mark. "Artificial Intelligence, Human Flourishing & Communal Ethics." Unpublished presentation at Texas State University 10/16/2018.

Grenz, Stanley J. *Theology for the Community of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 2000.

Harris, Mark, "Inside the First Church of Artificial Intelligence," *Wired*. Backchannel. 2017. <https://www.wired.com/story/anthony-levandowski-artificial-intelligence-religion/> accessed 11/5/2018.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2001.

Huff, Douglas. "Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)." *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. ISSN 2161-0002. <https://www.iep.utm.edu/> accessed 11/14/2018.

Kleinig, John, "Loyalty", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. (Winter 2012 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/loyalty/>; accessed 11/14/2018.

Parker, Kelly A. "Josiah Royce" *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. (Winter 2012 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/royce/>; accessed 10/22/2018.

Royce, Josiah. (1908) *The Philosophy of Loyalty*. New York: Macmillen and Co.

Royce, Josiah. (1911) *The Sources of Religious Insight*. New York: Octagon Books. 1977.

Royce, Josiah. (1913) *The Problem of Christianity*. Vol. 2. New York: Macmillen and Co.

Way of the Future Church <http://www.wayofthefuture.church/> accessed 11/5/2018.

Faith and the “Not-So-Fun” Fundamental Attribution Error

*Derek de la Peña and Wiley Parkman
Wharton County Junior College*

Abstract

The current paper considers the fundamental attribution error (FAE) in the context of the Christian community and its potential prevalence. According to Ross (1977), the FAE concerns the tendency of individuals to overestimate internal (dispositional) factors when making causal attributions while underestimating external (situational) influences. Although little research has been done with the FAE in the area of faith, Li and colleagues (2012) argued that its prevalence might be differentially apparent with certain faith-based populations (i.e., Protestants versus Catholics). In the current paper, a brief history of the FAE is offered as well as a discussion of potential factors associated with faith.

Bible Throwing Barney is a legend. He knows his Bible well, and believes it is a powerful weapon against dark forces. Anytime he sees a nonbeliever doing something outside the line of his perceived sound theology, he throws a Bible at them. He is extremely proficient at his skill and has been known to hit nonbelievers in the face with a Bible from the church door all the way to the local bar. At the workplace, he regularly hits his targets as well and when he accesses his social media page, he can indirectly hit nonbelievers across the globe. It has been reported that Bible Throwing Barney has an uncanny knack for identifying potential targets by seeing small “specks” in people’s eyes. Unfortunately, however, despite his good intentions (i.e., to turn people to God and away from their evil ways), he usually ends up burning more bridges than he builds and rarely converts nonbelievers. According to folkloric experts, during his living years he turned more people away from God than any other Bible thrower in history. Ironically, he was considered by many (especially himself) as a ‘strong’ believer throughout his life. Fortunately, after attending a seminar on the fundamental attribution error during his last days, he realized that he had not adequately considered the plank in his own eye, and had not paid enough attention to the situational complexities of his targets. The good news is he was able to share his new found knowledge to his offspring before it was too late, and they were able to change the world for the better.

“...why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?” Matthew 7:3 NKJV

Hopefully, we made you grin with the contrived legend of Bible Throwing Barney. However, reckless “bible throwing” is certainly no laughing matter. Moreover, our attempt to incorporate hyperbolic humor may have been off the mark

and we apologize if we did indeed cross the line of academic/situational appropriateness. We implore you not to judge us too harshly as we admit to having as much character challenges as the next person, and must disclose that we were a bit uncomfortable broaching this topic, particularly as it might offend our Christian brothers and sisters of the faith. However, as professionals in the field of psychology we had countless conversations about the fundamental attribution error and its potential role in “the church in crisis.” With Christian church attendance trending downward (see Pew, 2019), we have both wondered whether or not the fundamental attribution error has had some influence. Although we have never actually seen someone throw their Bible at someone, we have witnessed plenty of character judgments and overzealous Scripture readings towards nonbelievers, which we confidently speculate can turn potential believers away from the faith, instead of towards.

It is important that we emphasize that we are both in agreement with our hypothetical character’s beliefs about the Bible (e.g., “powerful weapon against dark forces,” etc.). However, his process of making internal judgment of others, without any attempt to understand the specifics of their situations, is the point we are trying to underscore. We must confess that we have caught ourselves being overly judgmental towards others without a commensurate attempt to understand the complexity of individuals’ situations. Additionally, it should be duly noted that we seem primed to notice our judgmental tendencies after teaching the fundamental attribution error to our students. Based on conversations with each other, other colleagues, and non-practicing Christians, we suspect that the effects of the fundamental attribution error may be widespread in the church, particularly when considering the research to be discussed shortly.

The Fundamental Attribution Error

In 1977, Lee Ross wrote a frequently cited chapter highlighting the tendency of individuals to overestimate internal/dispositional factors when making causal attributions about others while underestimating external/situational influences. For example, briefly consider yourself in an everyday situation that involves you driving your car to a normal destination and someone else driving makes a move on the road that you disapprove (e.g., they cut you off and you have to hit the brakes fast). Do you instantly call that person a name that refers to their incompetence as a driver or do you consider the potential challenge to their situation (e.g., you may have been in their blind spot or they may have been in an emergency, etc.)? If you are like us, and many other drivers on the road, chances are you have often negatively assessed drivers’ competence (internal/dispositional factor) before you considered the complexity of their situation. Ross called this tendency the fundamental attribution error (commonly referred to as the correspondence bias) which has become a cornerstone in the field of social psychology (see Gilbert & Malone, 1995, for a historical account).

Collectively speaking, research related to the fundamental attribution error is vast and greatly influenced by the works of attribution theorists such as Heider

(1958), Jones and Davis (1965), Kelly (1967), and many others (e.g., Jones, Kanouse, Kelly, Nisbett, Valins, & Weiner, 1971; Weiner, 1974, as cited in Ross, 1977). Attribution theorists are interested in causal inferences that people make when confronted with particular situations involving other people and associated outcomes. Heider (1958) explained that people regularly act as amateur psychologists in studying why others behave the way they do. A classic experiment that exemplifies attributional mistakes people often make was done by Jones and Davis in 1967 with college participants who read essays that were either for or against the Cuban president (Fidel Castro). In one condition, participants were told that the essayists freely choose whether to write a pro- or anti-essay speech. Not surprisingly, participants rated the attitudes of the writers commensurately with the position; that is, those that wrote against Fidel Castro, had a negative attitude towards him, and vice versa for those that wrote positively. Interestingly, however, in a different condition, participants maintained the same directional pattern of attribution, albeit to a smaller degree, even when they were told that the essayist was forced to write either against or for Castro (irrespective of whether they liked him or not). Simply stated, participants continued to make an internal/distributional attribution of the essayists' attitudes towards President Castro without adequately factoring in the external/situation influence (i.e., that they were forced to write in a pro- or anti-direction).

Following the Jones and Davis (1967) study, research in North America continued to demonstrate the tendency to overuse internal attributions while underestimating external ones (see Ross & Nisbett, 1991). However, cross-cultural research later demonstrated that the effects of the fundamental attribution error are much less in Eastern cultures (e.g., East Asia) than in North America where most of the research had been done concerning with the fundamental attribution error in the 1960's through the 1980's (see Choi, Nisbett, & Norenzayan, 1999). Choi, Koo, and Choi (2007) asserted that because East Asians are more likely to engage in holistic thinking, they are less likely to experience the cognitive errors associated with the fundamental attribution error. Moreover, because individuals in individualistic countries, such as the United States, rely more on "self-success," it follows that these individuals (more prone to a self-serving bias) would judge others with internal dispositions in mind more so than those from collectivistic cultures (e.g., China and Japan) which are more group-oriented with regard to the conceptualization of success (see Cullen, Gentry, & Yammarino, 2015)

The "Fundamental(ist)" Attribution Error

Although robust research exists concerning the fundamental attribution error generally speaking (with lesser effects acknowledged with certain Eastern cultures), there is a shortage of research in the area of faith (see Li, Johnson, Cohen, Williams, Knowles, & Chen, 2012). Yexin Jessica Li and colleagues (2012) discussed this scarcity in research paper titled, "Fundamental(ist) Attribution Error: Protestants Are Dispositionally Focused." In addition to the lack of research highlighted in the area of faith, the authors hypothesized that the fundamental

attribution error is more prevalent with Protestant believers than Catholics due to beliefs and efforts concerning the soul. Li et al. (2012) underscored the Protestant Reformation, led by Martin Luther in the early 16th century, in which Protestants separated themselves from the Catholic belief that the clergy alone had access to God. Luther emphasized that the papacy of the Catholic Church had become financially corrupt, and it was no longer the church's responsibility to nurture the soul, but the individual's, resulting in a tremendous amount of soul-nurturing-autonomy post Luther (Hopfe & Woodward, 2004; Li et al., 2012; Williams, 2002).

This increased autonomy lies in stark contrast from the Catholic Church with its emphasis on sacraments and church ritual as important aspects to salvation. Li and colleagues (2012) argued that because of Protestants' new found duty to nurture their own souls through Christ, coupled with the mindfulness of the corrupt state of the soul generally speaking, a logical consequence would be an increase in the existence of the fundamental attribution error with Protestants, relative to Catholics. The authors emphasized that it is not that Catholics do not believe in the existence of a soul, but the trajectory of the Protestant reformation altered the course of how individuals would perceive their personal role in the sanctification process. It follows that the greater emphasis of a dispositional attributional style from the perspective of a Protestant is logical because they were no longer reliant on a priest, the Pope, or the Holy Catholic Church to intercede on their behalf. Li et al. (2012) argued that via the reforming of the religion, Protestants became less focused on individuals' personal situations and more concerned with internal dispositions.

In their paper, consisting of a series of four studies, the authors found that even when controlling for other confounding variables (Protestant work ethic, religious rigidity, and intrinsic vs. extrinsic religiosity), Protestants scored higher than Catholics on dispositional measures (Kitayama, Imada, Ishii, Takemura, & Ramaswamy, 2006), but not external ones. In addition, Protestants also scored higher on "belief in a soul" particularly when primed to write about their faith. Interestingly, in an intragroup comparison (Study 4), Protestants who were asked to write an essay for the existence of a soul made more internal attributions (but not external ones) than Protestants who wrote against the existence. Li and colleagues (2012) concluded that the more individuals become concerned about the "condition of the soul" the more likely internal attributions will be apparent.

Individualistic "Type I" Protestants and the Fundamental Attribution Error?

Recently, de la Peña (2019) published a paper investigating character differences between college-aged "Type I" Christians, who considered a relationship with God as the most important factor to happiness, and "Type II" Christians who considered some other factor as more important, such as family or financial success. This type of group classifying was different than past research focused on psychological processes associated with faith-based groups and church affiliation (e.g., Li et al., 2012, Protestants versus Catholics). In the de la Peña (2019) study, Christian denomination was not considered; the only group

concern was whether or not the Christian participants considered a relationship with God as the most important factor to happiness. Generally speaking, Type I (God-first) participants scored higher on well-being measures such as life-satisfaction, meaning, and engagement as well as character measures such as humility, forgiveness and gratitude, to name a few. Although the general results were positive for Type I participants, we now realize that an opportunity was missed to measure a potential negative attribute, the prevalence of the fundamental attribution error, which we now speculate would have been higher with Type I (God-first) participants compared to Type II.

Our reasoning is primarily influenced by the Li et al. (2012) study as well as previous research indicating stronger effects with the fundamental attribution error with individualistic cultures (such as the United States) compared to collective cultures (such as Japan and China, see Choi, Koo, & Choi, 2007; Cullen, Gentry, & Yammarino, 2015). It should be duly noted that participants in the Li et al. (2012) study (and de la Peña, 2019) were college students in the United States, which would raise the probability of the prevalence of the fundamental attribution error being apparent relative to potential studies conducted in collectivistic cultures. Simply stated, a Christian living in Chicago is more likely to make the fundamental attribution error than a Christian living in Tokyo; moreover, devotion to God may mediate attributions as well (Norenzayan & Lee, 2010). When a Christian considers his or her relationship with God as the most important factor to happiness, (s)he becomes more aware of concepts concerning “ungraced” human nature (de la Peña, 2019; Murphy, 2005), not only when considering oneself, but others as well. With the Li et al. (2012) study in mind, Protestants may be at greater risk because of the greater focus on the status of the soul (relative to Catholics) combined with the perceived responsibility of “soul nurturing” during the sanctification process. Recall that in addition to making more internal attributions than Catholics generally speaking, Protestant participants “who wrote about the existence of a soul made more internal attributions than did Protestants who wrote an essay against the existence of a soul” (Li et al., 2012, p. 287). We speculate that devotion to God may have mediated these differences even further.

Conclusion

Before continuing to speculate about the fundamental attribution error and people of faith, more research is needed in this area. Without robust data, we must admit that we are both a bit uncomfortable about broaching this topic with our individualistic “Type I” Protestant brothers and sisters of the faith (yes, we ironically classify ourselves in this category). Approaching a strong believer and informing them that they may be overly judgmental in nature is not something that either of us feel equipped to do so currently, particularly because we might be making the fundamental attribution error in the process. However, we do believe that this area is ripe for investigation and suspect that strong believers might be surprised at future findings. If nonbelievers are indeed feeling overly judged by those secure in their faith, then continued discussion about the potential role of the fundamental

attribution error in the church is certainly warranted. As Gilbert and Malone (1995) asserted many years ago, an observer of another person must be aware of the complexity of the individual's situation if the fundamental attribution error is to be avoided. We contend that becoming more aware of one's own propensity to make the fundamental attribution error might help even further.

Authors' Note

We would like to thank Wharton County Junior College (WCJC) for sponsoring our trip and for supporting this paper. A special "thank you" goes to Bill Johnson of WCJC for his insightful contribution and encouragement. Correspondence concerning this paper should be addressed to Derek de la Peña, Wharton County Junior College, 14004 University Blvd., Sugar Land, Texas 77479. Contact: delapenad@wcjc.edu

Biographical Notes

Derek de la Peña and **Wiley Parkman** are Professors of Psychology at Wharton County Junior College

References

- Choi, I., Koo, M., & Choi, J.A. (2007). Individual differences in analytic versus holistic thinking. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33, 691-705. doi: 10.1177/0146167206298568
- Choi, I., Nisbett, R.E., & Norenzayan, A. (1999). Causal attribution across cultures: Variation and Universality. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125, 47-63. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.125.1.47
- Cullen, K.L., Gentry, W.A., & Yammarino, F.J. (2015). Biased self-perception tendencies: Self-enhancement/self-diminishment and leader derailment in individualistic and collectivistic cultures. *Applied Psychology*, 64, 161-207. doi:10.1111/apps.12026
- de la Peña, D. (2019). Loving thyself and well-being: What does God have to do with it? *The Journal of Faith, Education, and Community*: Vol. 3: Iss.1, Article 4. Available at: <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/jfec/vol3/iss1/4>
- Gilbert, D. T., & Malone, P. S. (1995). The correspondence bias. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(1), 21. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.117.1.21>
- Heider, F. (1958). *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*. New York: Wiley.
- Hopfe, L.M., & Woodward, M.R. (2004). *Religions of the world* (9th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Jones, E. E., & Davis, K. E. (1965) From acts to dispositions: the attribution process in social psychology, in L. Berkowitz (ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Volume 2, pp. 219-266), New York: Academic Press.
- Jones, E. E., Kanouse, D. E., Kelley, H. H., Nisbett, R. E., Valins, S., & Weiner, B. (1971). *Attribution: Perceiving the causes of behavior*. Morristown, N.J.: General Learning Press.
- Kelly, H.H. (1967). Attribution theory in social psychology. In D. Levine (Ed.), *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation* (Vol. 15, pp. 192-238). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Kitayama, S., Imada, T., Ishii, K., Takemura, K., & Ramaswamy, J. (2006). Voluntary settlement and the spirit of independence: Evidence from Japan's "Northern Frontier." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 91, 369-384. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.91.3.369
- Langdridge, D., & Butt, T. (2004). The fundamental attribution error: A phenomenological critique.

- British Journal of Social Psychology*, 43(3), 357–369.
<https://doi.org/10.1348/0144666042037962>
- Lewin, K. (1931). The conflict between Aristotelian and Galileian modes of thought in contemporary psychology. *Journal of General Psychology*, 5, 141-177.
- Li, Y.J., Johnson, K. A., Cohen, A. B., Williams, M. J., Knowles, E. D., & Chen, Z. (2012). Fundamental(ist) Attribution Error: Protestants Are Dispositionally Focused. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 102(2), 281–290. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026294>
- Murphy, N. (2005). Constructing a radical-reformation research program in psychology. In A. Dueck & C. Lee (Eds), *Why psychology needs theology: A radical-reformation perspective*. (pp. 53-76). Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Norenzayan, A., & Lee, A. (2010). It was meant to happen: Explaining cultural variations in fate attributions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98, 702-720. doi: 10.1037/a0019141
- Norenzayan, A., & Nisbett, R. E. (2000). Culture and causal cognition. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 9, 132–135.
- Ross, L. (1977). The intuitive psychologist and his shortcomings. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 10, pp. 173-220). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Ross, L., & Nibett, R. (1991). *The person and the situation: Perspectives of social psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Williams, P. W. (2002). *America's religions: From their origins to the twenty-first century*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Weiner, B. (1974). *Achievement motivation and attribution theory*. Morristown, N.J.: General Learning Press.

Grand Designs: Vasco de Quiroga's Transfiguration of Indigeneity and the Deliverance of the Purépecha Empire

*Jon K Loessin
Wharton County Junior College*

*Up here with the clouds
and peepholes of ancient blue
the old kings looked through.
Seven hundred years ago
seventy-five hundred feet up
the last of the ancient cities
was founded: Patzcuaro, 'the stone door
where all changes to blackness'*

*Door to the land of the ancestors,
center of a vast empire
whose armies repelled and slaughtered
the Aztec invaders long
before the first Spanish travelers arrived
in 1521 and smallpox
shortly after
--Joanne Kyger, Patzcuaro (1999)*

Introduction and Background

The archaeological history of Michoacan in western Mexico can generally be divided into four periods: The Early Olmec Period (1500 B.C. to A.D. 1); The Middle Olmec Period (from A.D. 1 to 900); The Post Classic Period (A.D. 900 to 1250); and the Pre-Spanish Conquest Period (1250-1521). In this last epoch, much has been written and researched about the Aztecs due to their prominence and geographic location, the center of which is modern day Mexico City. That said, another tribal empire is noteworthy of attention—a people attacked but never conquered by the Aztecs--instead, one who repelled the Aztec invaders more than once and sent them back to their homeland defeated despite inferior numbers. They were the Purepecha and their world was north of Aztlan, located in the place they called “the center of the world,” and the “gateway to the gods”—Lake Patzcuaro.

...ancient cultures conceived of the center of the world as
the place where all essential modes of being come together,
where there is a direct link with the supernatural powers, and

where passage between the mundane and transcendent worlds is possible...In the early sixteenth century, the Lake Patzcuaro landscape was filled with powerful natural and supernatural forces. Here Purepecha myths and ideas of cosmic order were anthropomorphized in the geography of the surrounding terrain. The lake was organized around a central axis intersected by the multiple realms of the cosmos. The very center of the lake was considered to be the place where one could obtain the most direct contact with the sacred...invoked through the mediation of the four brothers of the solar deity Curicaueri...each...had a cult center in the appropriate cardinal direction on the shoreline of the lake.

The Purepecha settlement of Patzcuaro has been described as “the last of the ancient cities.” While Lake Patzcuaro emerged as the center of sacred energy, the capital city Tzinzunzan was the political and economic hub of the Purepecha Empire. Tzintzuntan, only a short distance away, housed the Purepecha priest-king, the *Cazonci*, who was an undisputed and omnipotent ruler, the captain-general in war, and the human representative of their God, the solar god, Curicaveri. (So revered, the *Cazonci*'s multiple wives were expected to commit ritual suicide upon his death.)

Tzinzunzan, which means “the place of the hummingbirds” was also rich with religion and tradition. The hummingbird was associated with the ancient city of Teotihuacan where they are depicted as pictographic symbols of the sun in murals. In Tzinzunzan, they were valued as sacred birds whose feathers were used to craft pictures.

Also in Tzinzunzan, burial pyramids, known as Yacatas among other archaeological sites were centrally-located to the ninety-one Purepecha settlements within a 75,000 square kilometer Empire (almost 30,000 square miles) and by 1521 when the Spanish conquistadors arrived, the population had grown (with blending and alliances with the violent Chichimec tribes [whose name translates as “people of the dog lineage”] among other migrants to the region) to approximately 1,500,000.

Sometimes the collection of these broader regional peoples are referred to as the Tarascan Empire, however, this is a mistakenly applied name from the later Spaniards referring to legendary stories about “fathers-in-law” or “sons-in-law” to which the term “Tarasco” refers. More appropriately, the Aztecs in their Nahuatl languages referred to their northwestern lake-region neighbors as Michhuàquê” meaning “the place of those who have fish” which gave rise in time to the name of the Mexican state of Michoacan (and incidentally, also the U.S. state of Michigan).

The Purepecha Empire was influenced by a wide array of earlier civilizations ranging from the Andes in South America to the Anasazi of North America. Perhaps as a result of these diverse influences, they were among very few Mesoamerican tribes to use metals for tools, weaponry, and ornamentation. Also, unlike other tribes of Mesoamerica, the Purepecha fortified and patrolled their regional borders from intruders and invaders and formed the first identifiable

territorial state of its kind. They may have been aware of the collapse of the ancient Nahua (probably multi-ethnic) city of Teotihuacan in the 8th century. Theories suggest that the ceremonial center and marketplace town attracted so many migrants from all over Mesoamerica, that its infrastructure and ability to provide sustenance to its burgeoning population eventually resulted in discontent, civil strife, and a rejection and overthrow of the governing theocracy.

After the fall of Teotihuacan, the Toltec city of Tula began its dominance as a warrior city-state. Dominated by warlords with their images of jaguars and eagles, the Toltecs left their mark on western Mexico and expanded trade routes into Michoacan, Chihuahua, and what is now the American Southwest. But their successes were short-lived. As their range diffused their defenses, Tula was overrun by nomadic tribes from beyond their northern frontier. Still, Toltec images and symbols appear on the more recent Purepecha tombs and a sense of independence and preservationist instinct seems to have blossomed into Purepechan culture which persists today.

The geography of Michoacan also served to isolate and protect Purepechan culture after it became an organized nation-state. The high-altitude, volcanic mountainous terrain covered in pine forests with numerous lakes presented a natural barrier to both invasion and integration. When the first expeditions of Spanish friars trekked the area, they moved from valley to valley, finding people in each who did not know about the others, had radically different cultures, and who even spoke different languages. As has been stated,

Placing the Tarascans in time and in space gives one the strange feeling that history was marking time by waiting for one group of actors to exit, a process slowly taking place, and another group to enter. It is even stranger when one realizes that, for the most part, the actors were completely unaware of the others, and yet their destinies are linked.¹



Figure 1: The Range of the Tarascan State (The Purepecha Empire)

The establishment of the Purepecha Empire is best explained with a simple timeline:

- In the 13th century Chichimec warrior priest Hireticatame enters Michoacan near Lake Patzcuaro and began to exact tributes from the farmers and fishermen already settled in the area and led military campaigns against the villages on the shores of Lake Patzcuaro
- Upon his death, he was succeeded by his son Sicuirancha who established the line of blood succession in the 14th century and was crowned the great cazonci, Tariacuri
- Tariacuri built a well-trained army and executed numerous wars of expansion and consolidation. The Purepecha Empire emerged.
- With the death of Tariacuri, the kingdom was divided between his son and two nephews, one of who was Tangaxoan I, the only of who would have an heir.
- In the 15th century, the Empire would be united again under the warlord general Tzitzic Pandacuare, son of Tangaxoan I, who would defeat the Aztecs in 1469-1478 ensuring the autonomy of the Purepecha-Chichimec kingdom until the arrival of the Spaniards.
- In 1520, the last Aztec emperor, Cuauhtemoc sent emissaries to King Tangaxoan I to ask for help in defeating the Spaniards, but he suspected the Aztecs were attempting a double-cross. Further, if the Aztecs were defeated, Tangaxoan I believed he could make a separate deal with the Spaniards to preserve peace. His successor son, Tangaxoan II eventually did, but with devastating consequences for the Purepecha.

The Spanish Conquest and the Failed Audiencia

As early as four years prior to the appearance of the Spanish Conquistadors, there are documented foretellings of the end of traditional Purepecha society. Tribal sages began to notice a rapid deterioration of their temples never seen before. Astronomers sighted two comets over Lake Patzcuaro that were believed to be signs of a disastrous change to come. A temple priest dreamed of conquerors on horseback ravaging the land. A village woman had a vision that she was taken by an eagle to a house in which the ancient gods were assembled and the gathering was told by the mother of all gods, Cuerauperi that she was offended by their sins and the penalty was the total destruction of the world, explaining that the gods and people of earth must die so new divinities could be born and any survivors of the cataclysm would be responsible for beginning the new era.

In October of 1519 the Aztec emissaries arrived in Tzinzunzan to seek help in trying to defeat the Spaniards. Little did the Cazonci Tangaxoan I know the delegation had brought more than news of Spanish invaders. He died shortly after the meetings of smallpox. He was succeeded by his son Tangaxoan II but in the confusion of the rapid changes occurring, family dissension emerged resulting in a failed coup and the execution of his brothers and their co-conspirators. Mixed and confused messages of possible courses of action to deal with the Spanish

authorities and their armies of Mesoamerican troops after the defeat and destruction of the Aztec kingdom lead to more discord and disagreement. Some wanted to fight, some leaned toward mass suicide of the nobles, but in the end, the Purepecha welcomed the Spanish into their lands and hoped for the best. Shortly after entering Tzinzunzan, the Spaniards saw the blood of human and animal sacrifices on the pyramid temples meant to avert the looming crisis. Horrified, they destroyed the sacred statues of worship as the indigenous locals looked on in terror at the desecration of all things sacred to them.

The indiscriminate violence against the indigenous and the greed of the invaders soon convinced the natives that the Spaniards were not divine beings. Gold had been discovered in Michoacan and slave labor became commonplace. Communities were made to pay tributes to the Spanish authorities to insure being left in peace. The *Cazonci* was ordered to hand over any and all gold and silver and always bring riches as gifts to every meeting between him and the lead conquistador, Beltran Nuno de Guzman, who had been appointed as the first Audiencia to New Spain. A once respected lawyer, Guzman became a self-serving, greedy, obstinate, and ruthless thug. He sold natives into slavery (even outside of Mexico), demanded outrageous tribute payments, destroyed numerous temples searching for riches, and kidnapped women. Rebellions were quashed violently and by execution. By 1529, Guzman's behaviors were so documented, Catholic clergy, particularly Franciscan Archbishop Juan Zumarraga, began to complain that something must be done to protect the innocent indigenous population from him. Guzman's answer was ordering the destruction of a Franciscan chapel and having a gigantic mansion built on the site for himself.

Before the Guzman problem was addressed by Spain, Guzman committed the unthinkable. After Tangaxoan II, who had already been imprisoned and tortured by Guzman more than once, was summoned to a meeting and brought twenty-six silver plates as a tribute payment for Guzman. The Audiencia found the gift an insult and ordered a show trial to publicize Tangaxoan's crimes against Spain and his people. On February 14, 1530, he was sentenced to be tortured by horse dragging then his injured body burned to death on a pyre. The execution threw the Purepecha into chaos—warfare, ecological collapse, disease, slavery, and generally, death was decimating the Purepecha.

Spain appointed a second Audiencia in 1530. Don Vasco de Quiroga (1477/8-1565) was born in Galicia, Spain into an aristocratic family. Politically well-connected, he had served as a judge in Spanish North Africa (Oran, Algeria), dealing with corruption and greed in that colony. Guzman had finally been discredited to the Spanish crown and while Quiroga had been offered several positions to which to transfer, he was uncertain which to accept. He entered a monastery to "make a proper decision."

One day, in the chapel of the monestary, Quiroga was listening to the monks sing the divine office: 'While the monks were reciting their office, he was struck by the words of the psalm: "Offer up the sacrifice of justice and trust in the Lord. Many say, who showeth us good things?" Quiroga

interpreted the psalm as the voice of Amerindians crying out to him, “Who will show us good things?” He believed that the message was a divine call for him to be the “sacrifice of justice’ so that by accepting the position he could be God’s instrument of ‘good things.’

In January of 1530, (too late to stop Guzman’s trial), Isabella of Spain appointed Vasco de Quiroga royal judge to the second Audiencia of New Spain. Within three years, “he would replace the *Cazonci* as the spiritual and temporal guardian of the Purepecha kingdom.”

Quiroga’s Grand Design

With the destruction of the indigenous nobility, the temple complexes, the ritual centers, and the size of their population came the erosion of the collective memory of the Purepecha making local or regional memory more dominant. Quiroga entered the kingdom at the time where the deconstruction of Purepecha society had not been completed but the fragments needed to be reassembled, even if in a newer configuration. While Quiroga was not a priest, he was devoutly Catholic. His goal was justice and God was his guide. Part warrior, part rebel, and totally idealistic, his plan to resurrect Purepecha culture was based on a grand design coupled with unquestioned humanity.



Figure 2: Vasco de Quiroga (1470/78-1565)

Unlike his predecessor, he cared deeply about the indigenous peoples and their well-being. He was selfless and flexible, except to his rivals. Instead of destroying their pagan temples and forcing them to convert to Orthodox Catholicism as others had done by destroying religious sites and building a Catholic chapel on the sacred ground, Quiroga took the best of both and nudged the indigenous toward Christianity, one act at a time. He left the traditional sites standing but used stones

from them to construct the new Catholic chapels on new ground, linking the past to the future. This transfiguration extended to saints. Rather than destroying the images and forbidding traditional icons, Quiroga authorized a new series of saints for the soon-to-be converts. It is said that some Purepecha communities have a saint for every day of the year and certainly some communities have their favorite patron saint. Each craft and occupation has its own saints as well, and there is a reason for this.

Quiroga based his grand plan in part on Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516). Quiroga found More's work to be the ideal plan for developing what he called, "an Indian Republic." Implementing his ideas would, in his words, help them to "guard, conserve, and more easily manage" their own societies. It would also introduce them to "the faith and to an integrated social order" referring to becoming cultivated Christians and abandoning inappropriate acts such as "pantheism, polygamy, and nomadism." It was the way for them to achieve *polis*:

For Quiroga, the idea of *polis* included his desire that the Amerindians live a regulated urban life...only when the Amerindians were aggregated into urban settlements and instructed in the basics of 'civility' could they begin to understand the word of God.

To this end, Quiroga planned and began developing *hospitales pueblos* (hospital towns) and later, the School of Arts and Crafts. The hospital towns were places dedicated to the health and welfare of native peoples who needed care of any sort, including food or shelter.

Quiroga introduced vocations particular to his utopian community. He introduced the cultivation of bananas in Tzirándaro and promoted the creation of the region's livestock activity with horses, pigs and sheep, and organized the communities in the region so that each one had a specific economic activity that contributed to the regional economy. For example, the villages below were vocationally developed as follows:

- Uruapan/Patzcuaro: Lacquers;
- Teremendo/Ocumicho: Leather objects;
- Bumper/Paracho: guitars, musical instruments and furniture;
- Santa Clara del Cobre: Copper objects;
- San Felipe: Blacksmithing;
- Patambán: Pottery;
- Nurio and Aranza: Wool fabrics;
- Tzinzunzan: Stone carving and basket weaving;
- Janitizio: Fishing nets;
- Capula/Santa Fe: Pottery and ceramics;
- Quiroga: Wooden chests

Religiously and architecturally, the multiple *Hospital-Pueblos* were designed to feature a temple dedicated to a patron saint and a chapel dedicated to the Virgin of

the Immaculate Conception. The temple occupied a dominant space in the urban layout of the town, while the chapels of the Immaculate Conception were located in the architectural ensemble of the "hospital," the heart of the institution.

Many of the temples and chapels built between the 16th and 17th centuries have altarpieces and "historic skies," also known as "crafts." They have roofs profusely decorated with religious motifs, which at the same time fulfill the objectives of ornamentation, devotion and education in the faith. They are full of symbolisms born in medieval Europe, later adapted to the perspective of the Purépecha natives.

For his efforts, Vasco de Quiroga became the first Bishop of Patzcuaro (after moving the regional capital there from Tzinzunzan and had plans to build a hand-shaped, five nave cathedral there rivaling the size of the Vatican to offer mass in five native languages. He is still adored by the Purepecha as their savior and remembered affectionately as Tata Vasco.

The Result of Tata Vasco's Plans

There is a story that after Quiroga built his first Temple of San Francisco in Tzinzunzan using, in part, stones from Purepecha pyramids, he apparently engaged in an act of defiance toward Spain who had forbidden the growing of olives in New Spain as they wished to monopolize an import route for the sale of olive oil to the New World. Quiroga somehow managed to obtain some olive saplings from Spain and plant thirty-tree (one for each year of Christ's life) and they still survive today (at almost 500 years of age). However (and ironically), it is reported that none of the trees have ever produced a single fruit.



Figure 3: Quiroga's Olive Trees in Tzinzunzan in the Franciscan Convent

The craft towns are still operating in their original focuses and the skills have been passed down through generations making Michoacan a center for some of the finest artistry in the world.

The Purepecha population today is decidedly Catholic, but not in practice as the mother church would like and we have Tata Vasco to thank for that in part.

Almost daily celebrations began before dawn celebrating a saint or a remembrance with the explosions of fireworks that wakes any that are not already awake. The fiesta is a religious expression that characterizes Mexico and reflects the roots of indigeneity. Other customs range from odd to raucous. Such is the nature of Michoacan and the Purepecha. As stated by the Religion News Service more than a decade ago (and it has not changed much):

At heart, the Purepechas haven't accepted everything brought to them by the missionaries...They do things without taking into account the priest and the norms put in place by the Catholic Church...Instead, they follow their own customs.

Nowhere is the uneasy coexistence of Catholic and native traditions more evident in Mexico than in the celebration of the fiesta, when the religious mingles with the profane. Saints dance on the shoulders of sinners and Indians drink to their conversion after the Conquest... it's hard to figure out what part is Purepecha, what part is Catholic, and what part is a misunderstanding between the two... saints define the days and weeks. Each craft has its saints, and even thieves and prostitutes pray to their patrons. And each town celebrates its own patron saint, sometimes for days.

The late Mexican author and poet Octavio Paz stated it this way, "The fiesta is by nature sacred and above all, it is the advent of the unusual. It all occurs in an enchanted world: Time is transformed to a mythical past or a total present..."

Tata Vasco should be proud—but perhaps not. The transformation he began demonstrates success, but the result is at best a hybridization of faith and at worse, a "reverse transfiguration" of the faith itself. Just as the Spaniards destroyed the Purepecha temples and used their stones to build Catholic missions to nudge the transition of the Purepecha into Christianity, the Purepecha, in turn, (often with Quiroga's blessing) transfigured traditional Catholicism with an indigenous replica—a link to their Tarascan past—Christian for certain, but decidedly still today driven by ancient ties to pagan ritual and inclusive of extra-Catholic figures and symbols of worship.

Addendum: As cited in a local hotel newsletter in December 2020, a fascinating discovery has emerged regarding the process of transfiguration of faith described in this paper:

Many of the saints of the Catholic church in Michoacán have corresponding gods & goddesses in the pre-Hispanic culture, repurposed in order to evangelize the Purhepecha. In fact, it has been recently discovered by Xray studies, that inside some of the statues of these saints are small images of the pre-Hispanic gods, likely secretly placed there by artesanos who made those original statues. The

Indigenous found a way to pray to their own gods while appearing to pray to the gods of the conquerors.

Biographical Note

Jon K. Loessin is a Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at Wharton County Junior College. He is the current President of the Association for the Scientific Study of Religion (ASSR), Editor of the *Annual Proceedings of the ASSR*, and a Director of the Southwest Commission on Religious Studies. In recent years he has focused his research on counterrevolutionary theory and social movements, mysticism and religion in literature, and the rise of postmodernity (especially the decline of traditionalism and its consequences).

References

Kyger, Joanne. *Patzcuaro*. Bolinas, CA: Blue Millennium Press, 1999.

Mull, Lorraine. *Patzcuaro: A Complete Tour*. n.p.: n.p., 2017.

Religion News Service. *Purepecha Indians in Mexico Mark Catholic Holidays Their Way: Heritage: Nowhere is the uneasy coexistence of the two traditions more evident than in the celebration of the fiesta, when the religious comingles with the profane*. Los Angeles Times. 02 September 1995.

Ryan, Victoria. *Hotel Casa Encantada E-newsletter*. Patzcuaro. 05 December 2020.

Verástique, Bernardino. *Michoacán and Eden: Vasco de Quiroga and the Evangelization of Western Mexico*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000.

A Contemporary Study of Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp: Its Historical and Spiritual Legacy

*Todd Jay Leonard
University of Teacher Education Fukuoka, Japan*

Prologue

From the earliest times when Americans first began to move westward as the United States began to grow and expand, pioneers settled in remote areas in order to begin new lives in untamed territories. Religion was an important aspect of the American experience, but due to demographics, being able to have communal worship services proved difficult due to geographical considerations that isolated people from one another. The concept of evangelizing and spreading the gospel by means of a “camp meeting” became widespread around the country in the 19th century as a way to bring “religion” to those living rurally on the frontier. Sometime later, Modern Spiritualism would borrow and adapt this idea to offer believers an opportunity to meet and socialize with like-minded people who had difficulty finding a Spiritualist association or church near where they resided.¹

As the United States grew, “camp meetings” quickly gained favor amongst established religions as a way to minister directly to a larger number of souls in the shortest amount of time. Camp meetings grew out of the religious tradition of “revivals” which gained in popularity during the Second Great Awakening (1790s-1840s)—an evangelical movement that was largely advanced by the Protestant religions of Methodism, Baptism, and Presbyterianism. The western frontier offered much opportunity economically to early settlers, but it often meant people lived a life isolated from the civilized world.

It was from this tradition of Methodist-based camp meetings that the Spiritualist movement borrowed the basic concepts, and adopted certain components, to create its own version of a mass gathering of the faithful in order to experience and share in the belief system. A major and key difference, however, involved the giving of messages from the departed to the living. A Spiritualist camp meeting basically functioned in a similar fashion, but instead of fire and brimstone sermons, people were regaled with short lectures (often based on scripture) and a

¹ For a detailed explanation of “camp meetings” and Spiritualist camps around the United States, see Leonard (2017) *Camp Meetings and Spiritualism: A Report on the Status and Condition of Functioning Spiritualist Camps around America* from which this section was adapted.

“message service” where mediums would stand on a raised platform in order to give to those in attendance mediumistic messages from friends and loved ones in Spirit.

In a relatively short amount of time, the Spiritualist movement began to attract a large number of adherents and without proper churches or gathering places in those early years, the idea of “camp meetings” took hold and groups of likeminded people began to gather to share Spiritualist ideas and to allow mediums an opportunity to meet and give messages to a larger number of people at one time.

The first 50-year cycle continued bearing the weight of establishing a strong foundation for the new movement. Mediumship as displayed by the Fox Sisters became popular throughout the country. The leaders of the day recognized Spiritualism as a philosophy that could change the world. In fact, it was taken to England just four years after its inception. From there, its journey around the world began. Meanwhile, meetings were held in halls in many major cities of the northeastern United States. The philosophers drew large crowds who listened to their oratories. Soon, they could no longer find halls large enough to house the crowds. The answer to the dilemma was to begin open-air grove meetings. (2 Awtry, p. 7)

[The ex-Methodists] suggested to the Spiritualists that it would be a way to serve the multitude that steadily increased in number. The leadership of Spiritualism [initially] looked at this grove meeting idea with deep suspicion. After much thought, they decided to implement it as an all day camp meeting. They expounded on how this new camp meeting should be different than the old Methodist grove meetings. Apart from the séance or picnics, it was based loosely on the lyceum movement. At first the speakers were quite comfortable with the Bible preaching. They treated Spiritualism as a kind of purified Christianity. At this time, the Spiritualists were religionists, liberals, and rationalists. This camp meeting style gave birth to the first Spiritualist Camp at Pierpont Grove, Malden, Massachusetts, in 1866; named after John Pierpont. In 1870, another camp was founded at Lake Pleasant, Massachusetts. Soon camps began to sprout up throughout New England, New York, Wisconsin, Iowa, Florida and westward to the Pacific coast. (2 Awtry, pp. 23-24)²

Initially, many camp meetings were held on the land of people sympathetic to the movement who offered the use of their property. The widespread popularity of these camp meetings eventually necessitated the purchase of land to construct a permanent campground for Spiritualists to use during high season (June through September, usually). As these camps

² Three of the earliest Spiritualist camps in the United States were established in Maine: Camp Etna (1876), Madison Camp (1879), and Temple Heights Spiritualist Association (1882).

began to take shape around the nation, associations were formed that allowed attendees to become members.

In the very beginning, canvas tents were used at these camp meetings by the mediums and attendees; hay for horses had to be brought by the people as well as firewood to cook. (Harrison, *et al.* p. 19) As these gatherings became more and more popular, actual land needed to be purchased in order to accommodate the thousands of people who came from far and wide to attend a Spiritualist camp meeting. Mediums sometimes made a wooden floor in their tents to make it sturdier, which eventually led to walls being added, making the structure a rustic shack. Gradually, these crude dwellings became more permanent and the shanty was born which allowed mediums a more permanent place to hold séances and to live during the camp season.

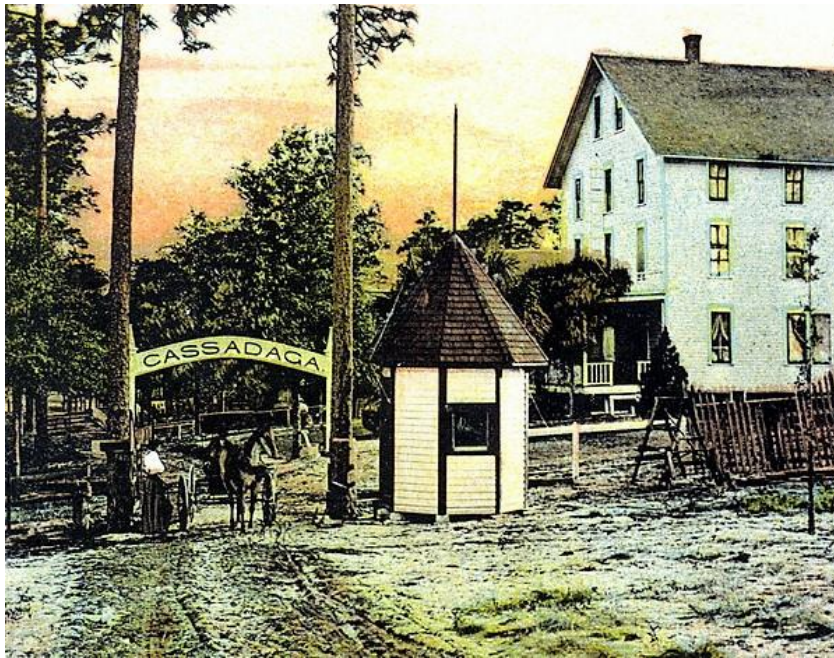


Illustration 1: An early postcard rendition of Cassadaga's entrance and early hotel.

In the ensuing years after the first Spiritualist camp was founded, dozens and dozens of Spiritualist camps sprang up all over the United States. Largely summer gatherings, these camps maintained a vibrant following and were quite active—especially during and after major wars—throughout the twentieth century. A number of these grew to a size where they became year-round camps, sponsoring churches and services throughout the calendar year with many activities and events organized for members and regular attendees. Today, there are roughly

only 20 camps around the United States (with a number of these inactive as of the writing of this paper).

In the case of the *Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Meeting Association*, it initially and primarily was formed as a “winter retreat” for mediums residing in the colder regions of the United States who wanted to escape the harsh winters, especially those living in upstate New York where “Lily Dale Assembly” is located. In fact, the name “Cassadaga” was taken directly from this New York Spiritualist community, originally named the “Cassadaga Lakes Free Association” (and now known as the “Lily Dale Assembly”). “The name Cassadaga is a dialect of the Seneca Indian and is expressed as ‘Gustavo Tecarneodi’ which means ‘rocks beneath the waters.’ The Seneca Native American Indian Reservation is just seven miles from Cassadaga, New York. (1 Awtry, 45)

The Founding of a Spiritualist Camp in Florida

The *Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Meeting Association* (CSCMA) has a long history in central Florida, originally incorporating in 1894. The principal founder of the camp, George Colby, had received a message from his own Spirit Guide, “Seneca,” during a séance he was attending in Iowa, advising him that one day he would be influential in finding and organizing a camp in the South. A well-known and highly regarded Spiritualist medium himself, he traveled around the country as not only an advocate for Spiritualism, but also as a trance medium, sharing his gift of mediumship with others. He frequently visited Lily Dale in New York, as well as other Spiritualist associations and camps.³

In 1894, Colby (along with six others)⁴ founded The Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Meeting Association—their first assembly being attended by

³ A portion of this section was adapted from Leonard (2016) *A Paper Commissioned by the John Fetzer Trust about Spiritualism, Spiritualist Camps, Camp Chesterfield, and Physical Phenomena*. [Unpublished paper commissioned by the *Fetzer Memorial Trust*, Vicksburg, MI.]

⁴ In her book, *Cassadaga: Where Spirits Meet* (2014), Marilyn Awtry listed George Colby as the founder of the actual geographic location of the camp, Cassadaga, and identified the following 13 individuals as being the founders of the “Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Meeting Association”: Thomas Skidmore (Lily Dale, NY); Marion Skidmore (Lily Dale, NY); Abby L. Pettengill (Cleveland, OH & Lily Dale, NY); Emma J. Huff (Lake Helen, FL & Lily Dale, NY); Frank Bond (Deland, FL); Harvey W. Richardson (East Aurora, NY); Adaila C. Jewett (Cleveland, OH); Jerry Robinson (Lookout Mountain, TN); Mariette Cuscaden (Tampa, FL); Soledad B. Sofford (Tarpon Springs, FL); George W. Liston (Forest City, FL); George Webster (Lake Helen, FL); and Maria H. Webster (Lake Helen, FL). (p. 55) In the Forward to her book, Awtry states the following: “Dr. William Rowley is credited with founding the first Spiritualist Camp in Florida at De Leon Springs and naming it the *National Spiritual and Liberal Association* (NSALA). George P. Colby became its first President. Once the Camp had outgrown its property, Abbie Pettengill, Marion and Thomas Skidmore, and Emma Huff, all of the ‘City of Light’ in New York (now the Lily Dale Assembly), were in full agreement with most of the membership to find it

nearly one hundred people from the nearby communities of Orange City, Enterprise, and Deland. In 1895 he deeded 35 acres of land in Cassadaga to the Association and his gift remains as the present day Camp site. During his fiftieth year (1898) the permanent, nationwide organization of Spiritualists, "The National Spiritualist Association, U.S.A." was completed and from this point until his death, Colby's activities seem to have been clouded or not well documented. But according to records, he 'passed over to the other side' on July 27, 1933 in Deland, not far from his beloved Cassadaga. (Karcher and Hutchison, 69)



Illustration 2: George P Colby

Well before the actual Cassadaga site had been found, however, back in 1875, as Colby searched for a perfect spot for a southern camp, "Seneca" guided George Colby to a wilderness area in Central Florida in Volusia County where he homesteaded for twenty years. After a charter was granted to the association in 1894, as mentioned above, he deeded the thirty-five acres of land to the *Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Meeting Association* in 1895. The association later was able to acquire additional acreage increasing its area to fifty-seven acres. The name for the camp was taken from Lake Cassadaga where Lily Dale is located, and this new southern camp served as a location for many Lily Dale mediums to winter during the long, harsh winters of upstate New York.

George Prescott Colby: A Spiritualist Pioneer

George P. Colby was born on January 6, 1848—the same year that the Fox Sisters made spirit contact in Hydesville, New York which started the Modern Spiritualist movement and

a new home. The Cassadaga community so much resembled the northern camp that the group of 13 are credited with having incorporated the Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Meeting Association (SCSCMA) as a sister Camp to their northern camp."

eventual religion. Colby was born in Pike, New York, Wyoming County which is nearly 90 miles southwest of Hydesville which is considered to be the birthplace of Spiritualism. He was the son of James and Elmina A. Lewis Colby and had four brothers and sisters: James L., Martin E., Eugenia, and Julia.

[Colby's] first occupation was that of a school teacher but the major part of his life was devoted to Spiritualism. Colby's remarkable mediumship first evidenced itself when he was only twelve years old so it was only natural that he was strongly attracted to Spiritualism. In [the] years to come, he was called to many parts of the country for the demonstration and propagation of his faith. The Cassadaga Lakes Free Association in New York (now known as Lily Dale Assembly) engaged him many times as a valued and favorite lecturer and teacher. (Karcher, Hutchison, pp. 66-67)



Illustration 3: George P. Colby sitting in a séance. Note the "spirit hand" seemingly reaching upward under the table in front of the sitters.

It was during his time in New York that he began to suffer from ill health and a doctor recommended he seek out a warmer climate in order to convalesce. (1 Awtry, 44) In October of 1875, he joined a small group of travelers from Minneapolis traveling south, which was then further joined by 175 travelers seeking a warmer climate from St. Paul, Minnesota. (Karcher, Hutchison, p. 67) Using a variety of modes of transportation including boats and trains, the group gradually got smaller and smaller.

Colby and the few remaining travelers arrived at Stark's Landing on the lower side of Blue Springs near Orange City about 9 o'clock on the night of November 1st. Since there was no transportation available at that time, the group took

shelter in a palmetto shed that had been thrown up by some men who were hauling wood for the steamboats. Spreading some corn fodder on the dirt floor, the weary travelers camped down the best they could. While they were preparing to go to sleep, Colby's spirit guide, "Seneca", appeared in the dim light of a kerosene lamp and talked to them....

Most of the party had never before that night experienced the manifestation of a spirit entity but George Colby, in his convincing way, explained the phenomena and gained the confidence of his companions. That night, Colby had a dream about Spiritualism—how it would someday be organized as a religion. In his dream, he saw a small community in Central Florida which consisted entirely of Spiritualists—a place where people would come from all over the country to learn about and experience Spiritualism. (Karcher, Hutchinson, pp.67-68)

Mr. Colby then set out with his spirit Guide, Seneca, to find a suitable location in order to have a camp. "The area, dotted with small lakes, reminded Colby of the Northern Cassadaga lakes in New York. During this exploration period, 'Seneca' was constantly at Colby's side—telling him that this was 'the place.' Colby was in love with the area and on the advice of his spirit guide, decided to settle here and promptly christened his new location: "Southern Cassadaga." (Karcher, Hutchinson, p. 68) Gradually, George Colby's health improved and he made the decision to make Florida his permanent home.

Interestingly, George Colby is not considered to be the sole "founder" of the Cassadaga camp and does not appear as a signee on the original charter. While he did scout out the land, clear it of brush and trees in order to settle upon it, named it, and had a dream of a southern Spiritualist camp, the founding must be attributed to the group of thirteen people mentioned earlier. In fact, Colby was first and foremost a businessman who had the mindset of "business is business." Although he did host Spiritualist meetings on the land from time to time before the camp was officially founded, it was a woman named Anna Stevens who purchased a large plat of land from Colby, but later was forced to abandon the mortgage due to financial troubles.

On March 15, 1892, Colby sold one large plat of land to Anna Stevens, a long-time resident of Lake Helen. Anna platted out Stevens' subdivision. Stevens Street is a main thoroughfare through downtown Cassadaga and the main street within the campgrounds [today]. Things did not go as Anna had planned. She could not or chose not to fulfill the balance of her mortgage to Colby. It is this land that the group of members of the Rowley Camp⁵ voted upon for their

⁵ "In 1893, a Spiritualist named Rowley showed up and decided to establish a Spiritualist center in either De-Leon Springs or Winter Park. He invited a number of prominent Spiritualists from the north to travel to Florida to check out the area. Two of these Spiritualists were women who were prominent

new endeavor. They assumed Steven's mortgage and the Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Meeting Association became a reality in 1894. (1 Awtry, pp.47-48)

In October 1894, nearly eighteen years after he first found and decided to settle on the land, thirteen Spiritualists signed the charter creating the new southern Spiritualist camp. The charter stipulated that the new association was to be a non-profit entity and it would promote the belief in the continuity of life of the spirit after the physical death. The charter described the immortality of the soul as "the nearness of the Spirit World, the guardianship of Spirit friends, and the possibility of communion with them." (MacGregor, p. 3) George Colby was not actively involved in much of the organization or running of the camp, apparently being advised by Seneca that it was best for him to maintain a low-profile and remain in the background, hence his name was not included on the original charter and he was never a leader of the camp. However, in 1895 he did deed thirty-five acres of his own property to the association and that same year, hosted the first camp meeting which lasted three days and included mediums and members who were active in the new camp. (MacGregor, p. 3)

Within three years of that first meeting, eight cottages, a dancing pavilion, a lodging hall, and a library had been built on the association grounds. Wealthy mediums from the north were being enticed to move to Cassadaga on a more or less permanent basis. From the late 1800s to the early part of the twentieth century, not much is written about the town. The camp apparently flourished, however, because the Cassadaga Hotel was built in 1922 and so were most of the cottages that still stand today. (MacGregor, p. 3)

This area of Central Florida that was once wild and untamed quickly built up and today is in the backyard of such huge enterprises as Disney World, Epcot Center, and Universal Studios. The barren and natural landscape that George Colby found and fell in love with is now completely developed, making the Cassadaga camp an old jewel in a new crown, having a history older than much of the bustling commercial retreats that sprang up all around it.

Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Today

The year 2020 marks the 126th year of camp meetings at the "Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp Meeting Association" (SCSCMA). Unlike most Spiritualist camps, which tend to be in gated, fenced communities with clearly marked borders, Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp is intermixed with non-association buildings, homes, and businesses. The buildings and enterprises that are associated directly and officially with the camp are clearly marked, but it

in the Lily Dale Spiritualist camp in New York. They didn't particularly care for Rowley, but Colby won them over, and they decided to create a Spiritualist camp on his property." (MacGregor, p. 3)

can be confusing as a number of buildings and businesses are privately owned and have no direct affiliation with the camp's board.

First and foremost, the Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp is a religious-based association and maintains a Spiritualist church with services for its members and visitors, as well as performing other religious-based events such as weddings and funerals—by no means do they consider what they do as merely entertainment for tourists who are coming for the day as a break from Disney World and Universal Studios to experience “ghosts” and “spirits.” This close proximity and intermixing of businesses and workers, however, does make it difficult for the public to discern which part of the Spiritualist camp is, and which is not, a part of the SCSCMA.

Today, the camp features the Cassadaga Hotel (which is no longer owned by the association but is perfectly preserved and offers guests a wide variety of amenities including a restaurant/bar, gift shop, and coffee bar), a central auditorium where services and events are held called the “Colby Memorial Temple,” a small community library, the Caesar Forman Healing Center, and a camp bookstore and welcome center (which includes a gift shop and a meeting hall). In addition, there is the Andrew Jackson Davis Educational building, as well as numerous spiritual displays and naturally landscaped sitting areas throughout the grounds. [See the Appendix for photos of some of these buildings and displays.]

The hotel is a prime example of the type of symbiotic relationship that is common in the Cassadaga community—the Cassadaga-approved mediums need the hotel for visitors to use when people need to stay overnight to attend séances, services, and events that they sponsor; and the hotel needs the notoriety and reliability of the association's approved mediums that serve to draw many visitors to the grounds. It was my impression that the two factions tolerate each other, but the non-association people and their ways of doing psychic and mediumship-work around the officially sanctioned events are looked upon suspiciously by the association's mediums and ministers because the Cassadaga-certified workers feel an obligation to offer the public a certain standard of mediumship through certification which may not be as rigorous, perhaps, by the non-association affiliated mediums and psychics who do their spiritual work basically alongside them. In fact, many Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp mediums display and advertise clearly that they are “SCSCMA Certified.”

Although at one time the hotel was owned and operated by the association, the original structure burned down on Christmas Day in 1926. It was quickly rebuilt and maintained for

some time by the association, but was sold to a private owner in the late 1970s. Today, the hotel offers guests a trip back in time to the Roaring Twenties with its Art Deco themed lobby with a Mediterranean flair, an excellent restaurant and bar called “Sinatra’s,” and an opportunity to stay in a historically significant landmark, which has been completely refurbished and preserved. The front porch is quite lovely with its shaded awnings and numerous benches and tables for guests to sit and enjoy the ambience.

The Information Center (Andrew Jackson Educational Building and Bookstore) is located at the entrance to the community and does post events which are officially sanctioned by the association. A combination bookstore and gift shop are in this building, along with an office and a nicely sized meeting room with an attached kitchen that serves as a meeting hall and venue for various events that are sponsored by the association. The association maintains a number of historical structures in the community, as well as the grounds that include park-like areas for sitting and a small lake.

The “Colby Memorial Temple” allows visitors to step back in time to experience how Spiritualist meetings and services must have been like in the early days of the camp. The building is arranged like an auditorium with antique folding seats, featuring a platform where message services and sermons are conducted. The original character of the building is noticeable upon entering, and it is nicely preserved and maintained. An area in the back and to the side is reserved for healings that are a part of the worship services.

Overall, the entire camp is well preserved and maintained. The quaint and lovely medium’s cottages are sprinkled throughout the grounds, as well as other non-association privately owned residences. This configuration certainly sets Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp apart from its sister camps in other parts of the United States because normally Spiritualist camps are gated and contained in a fenced area that sets out clear boundaries as to where the camp ground begins and ends. Although there is an entrance with pillars announcing the camp, soon it is clear that the various buildings and businesses in and around the actual campgrounds are not necessarily owned and run by the association (the hotel being a prime example of this fact).

Epilogue

Spiritualism is currently undergoing a huge transformation. As with most movements, and religions, interest in them tends to ebb and flow, with high peaks and low bottoms—Spiritualism has historically been very relevant to the public after major wars (e.g. the US Civil

War, World War I, World War II, and even the Vietnam War). This, in part, is a result of people's yearning to understand the unknown, to find closure with the death of a loved one, and/or to believe that there is more to life than what we experience on this earthly plane...that there is life after death and the Spirit does continue on in another form after this earthly transition. Spiritualism, since its inception in 1848, has offered its adherents and true believers hope and confirmation that the existence and personal identity of loved ones continue after the change called death; that the doorway to reformation is never closed against any human soul; and as individuals, we alone are responsible for our own happiness and unhappiness, placing moral responsibility squarely on ourselves.

Spiritualism, and subsequently Spiritualist camps by proxy, helped to fill an innate need and deep desire of people, offering a type of salvation and explanation of life and death that was lacking in the more traditional or mainstream religions. It is no wonder, then, that 19th and 20th people were drawn to Spiritualism's radically different belief system and people found solace at camp meetings with likeminded seekers as they tried to navigate through an uncertain world that was spiritually in upheaval.

Spiritualist camps that once flourished around the United States in the late 1800s, and throughout the 1900s, are much fewer and further between than when they were founded in and around the time of the Golden Age of Spiritualism (circa 1880s-1920s)—the era that precipitated the founding of the Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp. Although there are a number of camps that are still active around the United States, many celebrating well over a century of camp meetings—some seasonal, others operating year-round—many more have been abandoned due to neglect and derilection.

The three most successful and largest of the old-time Spiritualist camps are Lily Dale Assembly (New York), Camp Chesterfield (Indiana), and Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp (Florida). Sadly, many camps that were so vibrant and active in the past have been shuttered and abandoned. A few hang on tenaciously with a group of dedicated volunteers who desperately want to keep them afloat but due to a lack of interest in members and no source of revenue, they struggle. Others function seasonally, mostly, and are able to continue the Spiritualist tradition that started with them over a hundred years ago.

Fortunately, in terms of historical, cultural, and spiritual significance, Cassadaga continues to be a vibrant and active Spiritualist camp, attracting visitors from all over the world. With sunshine in abundance, the camp operates year-round and has weekly events and activities

scheduled throughout the year. I had the great fortune to attend services and meet with resident and visiting mediums who made me feel very welcomed during my visit to this camp. It was my impression, however, that like other Spiritualist camps around the United States, having members and parishioners that are a consistent part of the camp could be more; one-day visitors are, of course, welcomed and appreciated, but similar to other denominations, attracting members to make it a regular part of their spiritual lives is something that is plaguing congregations and churches all over, and Spiritualism is no exception.

Biographical Note

Todd Jay Leonard is a full-professor at the *University of Teacher Education Fukuoka*, Japan, where he is a faculty member in the Department of Education specializing in “English Education.” As well, he is a member of the graduate school faculty where he teaches courses and seminars in the areas of comparative culture, cross-cultural understanding and history. He is the author of numerous academic articles and 22 books on topics ranging from American religious history, language, culture, and education. He now calls Fukuoka, Japan home where lives, writes, and teaches.

Bibliography

1 Awtry, M. J. (2014) *Cassadaga: Where Spirits Meet*. Sanford, FL: Shen-Men Publishing.

2 Awtry, M.J. (2011) *Spiritualism on the Move: A Reality Check for the New Century*. Sanford, FL: Shen-Men Publishing.

Google Images. [For Illustrations 1, 2, and 3.] [Retrieved on January 31, 2020]

img.69gWQ4g1hhg&ved=0ahUKEwjPquHCIPvmAhVBMN4KHSznDb0Q4dUDCAY&uact=5#imgrc=_riQ S5rBpT5QDM:

Harrison, P. et al (1986) *Chesterfield Lives: 1886-1986—“Our First Hundred Years”*. Chesterfield, IN: Camp Chesterfield Publishing.

Karcher, K. and Hutchison, J. (1980) *This Way to Cassadaga*. Sanford, FL: John Hutchison Productions (Seminole Printing).

Leonard, T.J. (2016) *A Paper Commissioned by the John Fetzer Trust about Spiritualism, Spiritualist Camps, Camp Chesterfield, and Physical Phenomena*. [Unpublished paper commissioned by the Fetzer Memorial Trust, Vicksburg, MI.]

Leonard, T.J. (2017) “Camp Meetings and Spiritualism: A Report on the Status and Condition of Functioning Spiritualist Camps around America.” *Association for the Scientific Study of Religion 2017 Proceedings*, pp. 11-30; Dallas, Texas.

MacGregor, T. and R. MacGregor. (2011) *Sidney Omarr’s Day by Day Astrological Guide for Libra—September 23-October 22, 2012*. New York: Signet Books (Penguin Publishing).

The Year 2020 Proceedings of the ASSR

Moore, J. [President] (2014) *Cassadga Spiritualist Camp 2014-2015* [Pamphlet]. Cassadaga, FL: SCSCMA Publishing

Visit Florida. <https://www.visitflorida.com/en-us/listing.a0t4000000EoHbGAAV.html> [Retrieved on January 31, 2020.]

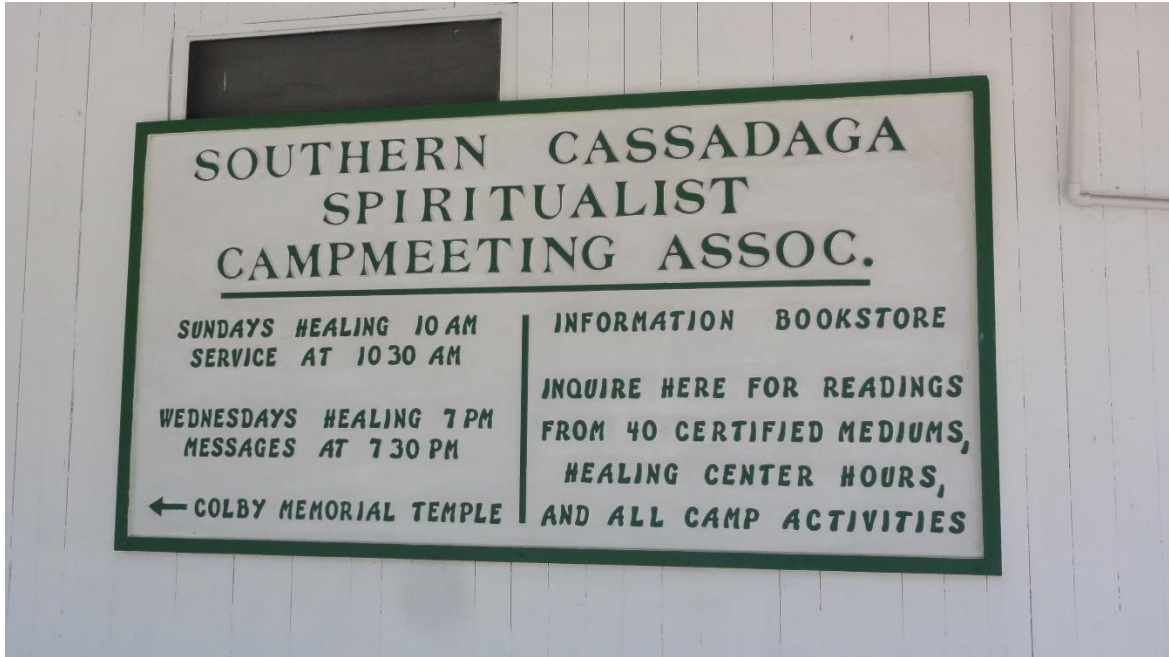
Appendix

[All photos by the author, July 27, 2015]



Entrance to Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp; (left) Andrew Jackson Davis Educational Building and Bookstore; (below) Gate entrance to the camp grounds





Sign at Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp to assist visitors.



Street signs on the grounds of Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp.



(above) Colby Memorial Temple; (below) George Colby Memorial Marker.





(above) Inside view of the Colby Memorial Temple; (below) Colby Memorial Temple marquee sign.





(above) Brigham Hall (apartment building); (below) Caesar Forman Healing Center.





(above) Hotel Cassadaga; (below) Hotel Cassadaga Lobby.



***Daughterly Speech and Love that Overcomes Death:
„Die Tochter“ of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy***

Jerry L. Summers
East Texas Baptist University

A century ago, Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy offered up his book *The Marriage of War and Revolution*.¹ Late in the book he placed a chapter entitled *The Daughter*, a critique of the controlling elements of German and European societies, specifically in reference to male-dominated cultural religion in both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, modernist philosophies and theologies, the emphasis of manly and nationalistic spirit over the Spirit of God, and the cultural suppression and humiliation of Woman.² These elements had helped to bring about the destruction of national spiritual character and resulted in six million German deaths alone. *The Daughter* also countered these fallen powers of society and culture with the proposal that Woman, predominantly as the wife, held the spiritual connection to lead Man to the source of restoration and salvation. These images and arguments he described in Goethean, anti-Nietzschean language, which he mixed with his unique sociological and historical understanding of the foundations of a thriving society and its processes for transforming culture.

The Daughter appeared again in booklet form in 1988 with Martin Buber's translation from Hebrew to German of *The Book of Ruth*, "in a pretty, white booklet" as Rosenstock-Huessy had mentioned in 1961 that he wanted after his death. Editor Bas Leenman wrote in the Introduction that the book appeared to be for men. He declared that in *The Daughter* woman was finding her voice at a time, "perhaps even the right time," when the predominant voice of masculinized knowledge had long since lost faith with humanity. The time was right for the liberated Daughter of Mankind to have full voice and to lead where the men could not. Again, Leenman, "For we have to be creative again. And who under the four basic patterns Father-Mother-Son-Daughter is more creative than the daughter?"³

The identity of the "Daughter of Mankind" is drawn from the millennia-long representation of exemplary or iconic women; for example, Ruth of Moab who was a true daughter among daughters, a daughter and adoptee of her adopted God and country, and important as the best of her type. Innumerable girls and women bear her name. The traditional synagogue worship honors Ruth during the Feast of Shavuot, which is associated with Israel's grain harvest in Ruth's story, and is about the same time as the Christian feast of Pentecost. Ruth as a Daughter of Mankind bespoke the promise of a festival time when all men and women might be "daughterly" in their love and understanding for one another. That promise became the vision of Rosenstock-Huessy for the healing of humanity by the daughterly Spirit of God.⁴

Having served five years in the Imperial German Army and seen Death in the face, Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy⁵ had certainly grieved to see so many lives cut short and the death sentence carried out for an entire age. In *The Daughter*, he wrote on war chiefly as man to man, or so it seems. Yet, Leenman asks, were there women who were willing and ready to read alongside the men? Men and women

who recognized Germany's "bleeding from many wounds" and mourned six million deaths may hardly have known what to say. Rosenstock-Huessy's words were hard to bear, yet women should have something to say, however difficult to accept, if Germans were to overcome the obstacles to renewal.⁶

Though Rosenstock-Huessy had focused himself intently on modern problems of church, state, and the history of law, the Great War intensified his attention and the imperative he felt to respond, so *The Marriage of War and Revolution* was but one of many publications he wrote before and after the war. Hans R. Huessy reflected on his grandfather's sense of obligation to respond to his experiences and their lessons: "He felt that the old pillars of society (the state, the churches, and the universities) were all fatally compromised by their collaboration in the war effort." From 1920 until he and his family left for the United States after Hitler took power in 1933, he worked in Germany to "establish new institutions to bridge the class, religious, and ideological barriers that had characterized pre-war society."⁷

***Crushed and Not Healed*⁸**

In *The Daughter*, Rosenstock-Huessy took up an enormous task in describing the extent of injury and despair that covered Germany at the time when he wrote. Dramatically, he identified the tacit compulsion among postwar Germans to silence, specifically to avoid uttering the "essential truth" that all men sensed as they wanted never to have to speak about the wartime and postwar horror. His countrymen were willing to go through the motions of daily life in adamant, suffocating silence. Silence about the war enjoined denial; first, from the surviving military men who wore their heartbreak, depression and injuries during the national postwar convalescence; and, second, were those who returned to their pre-war involvements as much as possible, seeking to forget but also to make up for lost time and income. Sadly, there was no protection except the brooding, pale darkness of defeat and shame. Germans could not see well enough to admit their broken vision, their universal sickness, the "worm gnawing at our root."⁹ (29)

In circumstances so dire, might the sick heal themselves? Where was the fresh blood to "flow in our hearts so that we become newly born?" To be sure, no man could heal another, and any physician offering healing help was rebuffed. Provocatively, Rosenstock-Huessy asked, "So, is Germany only a vast hospital where we are laid up for the long term, overseen by hostile policemen?" It was a potent and critical question for Germans who might have forgotten their national inspiration and pride. (30)

In Chapter One of *The Marriage of War and Revolution*, Rosenstock-Huessy described Johann W. von Goethe and Otto von Bismarck as the political founders of spiritual or intellectual Germanness. The individual German experienced these outsized figures as poles of a "magnetic field" for a German's soul or mind, always exerting a legendary influence on the direction and shape of his life, his will and mind, his motivations and purpose, indeed, his world. "From them he learned how to be a German; he did drink from other spiritual waters, the Spirit of the Tribes or of Prussia or Homeland or the Church, but from Goethe and Bismarck he was born

again spiritually as a German."¹⁰ Sadly, the extent of damages due to war vanquished the vitality of German spirit.

The Prospect of Healing and Wholeness

Entering into a symbolic-metaphoric mode, Rosenstock-Huessy offered a source of hope that had originated nineteen centuries before, when "there surged up a fountain whose given purpose was for the healing of shattered hearts." The fountain signified the satisfaction of thirst and the promise of everlasting life, from an everlasting stream that, even if it were no more than a rivulet, still would be strong enough to revive men who had no power and were exhausted. The potent "healing flow" was more than enough to overcome fear and shame and let a man see himself in relation to God; to find a fiery inspiration with strength and confidence to stand. (30)

The flood, formerly unseen, was breaking freshly into the world, revealed as a flood of "living persons, innumerable drops that together form the stream that roars through the centuries." Each person was a drop in the flood, each one had been broken like the contemporary Germans, powerless, but now, simultaneously with the Water's touch, found fire flaming up in him. "The Water is the dew of the Word and the Fire is the flame of the Spirit." Each person became then a water bearer, and consumed in fire yet living, his heart a member in the urgent, surging, elemental waters. (30-31)

Earthly, physical beings as the Germans are, Rosenstock-Huessy wrote, whatever of that Water is available to them must actually be present and available in the world: it must be able to meet and touch the "Sons of Earth". It must be accessible to real persons in the real world, that is, it must be "humanly incarnate." There must be someone "who bears in his mortal frame the Water of the Spirit so as to transform us." Here, deeper into the imagery, the mystery, we read, "The Spirit is the possession and reservation of the husband." And here we pause abruptly, because the assertion is not obviously biblical or necessarily spiritual, but it does work within the author's system of expression and analysis. Here Rosenstock-Huessy sets up the comparison that evokes contrasts of earthly versus spiritual relationship: the life of the Spirit is what we seek from the man, the husband. At the same time, the woman remains silent in the congregation. What does Rosenstock-Huessy intend by this transition? Who is the husband? Is the woman as the beloved bride, as one loved in an earthly, physical way, being set in contrast to the "consecrated, heavenly, holy Virgin" for the heavenly bridegroom, or is there another, following question? It is as if our author is asking half a question and for the time being suggesting half an answer. (31)

For the time being, the embodiment of the Spirit, the incarnate "Water of the Spirit", was being revealed "in the bearing of the torch of the Spirit in the youths and men who were mortified in the flesh, and in the women only in so far as they have followed after the men in this mortification of inborn nature." Bodily injury and death had opened the door for the healing Spirit. But who could convey that Spirit? Neither the Roman Catholic nor, certainly, the German Lutherans had avoided the charge of spiritual irrelevance and cultural accommodation. (31)

No Help from Religion

"So it is," Rosenstock-Huessy wrote, "that a monk or a nun, priest or layperson, who clings ardently to the 'secret body of revelation' still is not able to reveal it; the Stream of the hereafter breaks itself on him. Whatever truth the religious person has is useless unless it comes from the Healing Stream," but "up until now your truth no longer enlivens the closest of your brothers because you cannot compel him to believe you anymore." The "ghosts of Truth" belong with the dead, but, conversely, to *live* in truth requires freedom that is absent. Freedom was absent along with the loss of leadership, the absence and loss were due to the end of the "age of masculine spirit" whose force was spent. (32)

The Israelite prophets had proclaimed the principle of transformation and redemption through the Stream, but it never broke through into earthly being or into their own lives. "As yet God had not become a human being, flesh and blood." The promise of the One to come did not find fulfillment. But then "God descended in humble form, and from that time for almost two thousand years he has been changing the world through his personal power, drawing all blooming of life unto himself, so that they may be joined with and gather into his incarnate body." But for the present in Europe, in Germany, the hope and force of that continuing event had been halted: "Like a hyperbola that reaches from infinity into present space, completes a broad arc and departs again from here into infinity, so now before our amazed misgivings stands the way of holy God." The fascinating, enervating prospect of healing, of salvation went quickly as it had come. (33)

Rosenstock-Huessy struggled with the judgment that all redemption and understanding lost their force along with the peoples' proclaiming the death of God in the nineteenth century. Paradoxically, the creation itself had come about through the creative will of God. "There, where there was his exact image, God should have been and could have been there." Even though the creative will of God made all that should and can be, such freedom in the hands of men meant they mishandled the Creation. Even then, God came in the Son in order to renew what human beings had abused. Then again, in contrast, humankind seemed determined to ruin the Creation again and to "destroy his revelation." God allowed them the power to do it, they who were made in the image of God and thus quite able to abuse the earthly form of the revelation, that is, the Creation. (33)

Men thus were able to rule the earth and got there by oppression. Church and State, churchmen and statesmen, much like the Roman soldiers who cast lots for Jesus' garments, had been likewise guilty, holding possessions and power as if they owned them while they detracted from God's self-revelation, humiliating instead of glorifying God. Yet Almighty God was found to traffic in impossibilities, but as Sovereign, God would allow only so much hubris among the servants of God and man; "there is no documented or institutional property before him." Gambling further in their presumption, Christendom even had treated the divine revelation as their own to control and dispense; but ended up scorning the power of the Spirit. What God in time and space freely unified in "the communion of the healing and saving Spirit," they separated, so denying the union of Holy Spirit and Church and divine sovereignty. Even the Roman Catholic Church found itself consigned to "this priestly confinement of the Spirit." (34)

Consistent with his longtime opposition to the bases and principles of modern thinking and academic disciplines, Rosenstock-Huessy turned to the limitations of modern Protestant theology, specifically, Christology, that had focused on "the curious existence of 1,919 years of 'historical development'," referring to the tendency to confine Jesus historically to his own era and to define Christ as a "latter-day creation of God." These Protestant scholars, pastors and professors denied eternity by imposing a barrier of historical distance or separation between Christ and contemporary Protestants. They had fashioned and advanced modernist interpretations of the historical Christ and the sociological and mythical development of Holy Scripture.¹¹ Even as self-identified representatives of the gospel, they showed themselves hostile to "the uniformity of Creation" who had "violently separated themselves from the past." (34-35)

Western Christian scholars and leaders were magicians who isolated God in space and time and so lost their place in the world as servants of the gospel. What this meant for the spiritual desolation in war's aftermath is not hard to conceive. Christendom, said Rosenstock-Huessy, "is the thorn fixed in the bleeding flesh of the world." The world needed no more wounds than it had already, and so this kind of Christianity, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, had been repudiated; the wounds it should have healed had scabbed over and were left to the "natural healers" who were plentiful. Nature itself had become the new healing, the new salvation. (35)

Still, there remained the possibility for a time when perishing, imprisoned "believers" were convinced their prospects and hope were gone, and revelation would return, but in new containers, new wineskins.¹² (35)

Rejecting divine sonship through the Spirit, mankind itself had exercised tyranny over the Spirit. Because of that God adopted the provision that in the plan of Creation as patience, as earthly-latent, unfinished creation. God had seized the heathen world from mankind, from Eve, from sensual desire, and from Nature, through Jesus. Jesus the Son himself resisted the charms of earthly figures and worldly temptations as he overcame Nature and Nation. As an enemy of the attractions of the Creation, he knew his own sensual nature and chose to be celibate, and so Christians adopted celibacy to demonstrate faith. That much, Rosenstock-Huessy said, commended the priests of the Catholic Church in divine service though with their renunciation of Nature; for the prominent medieval lay examples, St Henry II the Pious and his wife St Cunigunde the Pious, chastity and piety were one and the same. Rosenstock-Huessy seemed to complain, but he evoked an axiom that expressions of spirituality and piety do not necessarily result from choices with a redemptive or pious end in mind as they do from a conviction about the right way to proceed or respond in actual circumstances. Why else would Protestants shun chastity but end up puritanical, passionless, and tasteless—and where was their creativity? Why would Catholics rescue icons to make up for the loss of physical procreation, while Protestants "demolished the creative urge" but rescued reproduction? He exclaimed, "The Catholic does not live from inside out; the Protestant does not experience physical beauty from the outside in." To him these tendencies, their common "battle against sensuality" represented a mistrust of God and a "blunting of life instincts" that disqualified each as agents of the "healing

Spirit of God in the Creation." (36-37) Both tendencies that separated spiritual from physical engagement and productivity of souls lost something for everything gained, so there was an alternative in another source of hope.

Where God Walks If Not with the Religious: toward and with Woman

Clearly, "churchly Christendom" and its wrongs were what God in wanted to heal. The power of divine love to make heavenly love out of what is natural matches with the spiritual love that has become an earthly love, so the separation of human souls into body and spirit will heal no one. Neither body nor spirit offered up alone will help. (37)

God expressed unity of body and soul as grace and "beckons for the renewal of his revelation the daughter of mankind, the natural daughter and sister . . . [who] receives the calling in her heart to heal broken hearts." Whereas man himself was torn and threatened by the oppositions, say between "sensual happiness and peace of mind, animal instinct and spiritual character," his passions as part of the forces of Nature have typically produced great anxiety in himself that shows up as injustice and harm to woman. So, says Rosenstock-Huessy, "The sensual flight of the man dismembers the woman. He tears her apart into girl and wife, indeed according to whether he bows himself down to her, so that she devotes herself to her proper destiny, or whether he bows her down so that she serves his passion." Man's anxiety therefore separates him from Nature and from woman. (37-38)

Man's anxiety is doubled when he seeks to run from Nature, which is no solution; or when he strives to understand his own character, the essence of his soul, and does not distinguish between himself and Nature. The same holds true for man with regard to woman if he sees her as only another of Nature's forces. What Rosenstock-Huessy earlier said about man's misuse and abuse of Nature applies equally to woman. "Because until he listens to and understands the groaning of such a dependant creature, that is this creation, and she achieves her proper destiny, then she will continue to drape herself around his neck and distress him." Just as with Nature, the spirit of the woman confronts the man, and so, typically over time, the man has fled from her. The example of medieval Christendom's refusal to reconcile with Nature in the process toward modernity has its parallel in the Church's condemnation of woman in the *Witches' Hammer* of Pope Innocent VIII; the spirit of the woman was thought to be deficient, and, presumably, dangerous. Rosenstock-Huessy compared the opposition to modern natural science to the burning of witches. (38)

Epitome of the Masculine Spirit

Woman and Nature therefore were the threatening pair to men and Christianity--certainly western Christianity in the modern era. Women and girls had been kept to size, or diminished, according to Rosenstock-Huessy in 1920, and then he might be surprised at the relative changes in the status of women in the new millennium; he might also continue to be dismayed at the continuing casualties of the ongoing "War between the Sexes" in our time. In this context Rosenstock-Huessy focused on the deceptions of sex and taste that left the focus of men on their own pleasures unattenuated in the period after the French Revolution and the "Century of Unbelief". What is worse, the genius and inspiration of the nineteenth

century drew fuel from their opposition to both the Roman Catholic Church and to Protestantism, that is to say, Christianity. (38)

Prometheus is the Overman, said Rosenstock-Huessy, who combines modern intellectual and inventive genius with artistic powers in one, the epitome of manly or masculine spirit, of the heroic divinities of man's own creation in succession, "at the end of which, logically, stands Antichrist!" "The spirit of "Nature and Art" exalted the masculine spirit above that of Woman, whom Christianity itself already had made sinful." (39)

The Church, on the other hand, "wants the pure Virgin and Mother undisturbed by earthly, physical love; the Protestant wants the housewife, the married woman and the companion in the home." Rosenstock-Huessy argued that "the Promethean is acquainted with Woman only as such and cannot understand her." The limitations of a man's recognition or comprehension of a woman's essence lies in his own nature; however, to be sure, Woman is not, like Man, a genius or an artist, not someone to fashion something like a Vulcan god or a mechanical engineer.¹³ (39)

Increasing the challenge, Rosenstock-Huessy compared the similarities of the "learned expert" who cannot comprehend Woman and consigns her to "feeble-mindedness" with the Overman who in relating to Woman leads with the whip out of limitations to his own nature. By further, paradoxical comparison, even the "Hermit of Sils Maria,"¹⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, needed the "despised social animal," that is, woman, in order to bring reality into his life. After all, what would he have been, and what powers would he have wielded, without his sister Elisabeth? Moreover ironic, even the Antichrist needed the Eternal Womanly--the Eternal Feminine, for only then would he be able to learn what Prometheus had not noticed: patience and suffering. [40]

The spirit of the brilliant century past refused to confess its guilt; consequently, marriage was shattered. Marriage, compared with Christ and the Church, and founded to be the model of every bodily communion was degraded and made cheap. Because of this the Philistine haunted by the fever of work could cynically declare marriage a work collective. With that, marriage was destroyed, marriage, to which, looking up, one should say: "Every labor collective is a marriage!"¹⁵ (40)

Rosenstock-Huessy was not pulling for an equality of men and women based on modern movements but on an understanding of primal relationships based in the nature of language as a shaping force in any society, over time, throughout the past, and in the present. His explanations did not require or permit a static set of relations though marriage, for example, certainly appears to be "traditional" in his arguments. Fresh in his vantage point, he explained marriage as being beyond the appeal to tradition, rather that marriage as an expression of the "Multiformity" of mankind is part of the "life-giving powers . . . in the autobiography of mankind."¹⁶ Marriage as an expression of multiformity unifies man and woman in a social, life dynamic that overcomes the "manifold forms of 'death'". The "social death" described in *The Daughter* revealed not only the consequences of war but also the "fundamental spiritual condition" that produced both death and war, and it was the antithesis of what Rosenstock-Huessy valued and taught as the essential unity of all humankind,

no matter the extent of differences.¹⁷ Yet behind all of his arguments lay a set of principles that he began to study and explain in the first decade of the twentieth century.

It is good to keep in mind that Rosenstock-Huessy propounded a highly unusual but ultimately reasonable source of healing for Germans in *The Daughter*, if for no other reason than that if one part of the economy of household and marriage and Spirit was incapacitated, then the other might well be able to compensate and to promote healing. If this sounds overly idealistic or unrealistic, please remember that Rosenstock-Huessy valued and proclaimed these relations as fundamental for all of society, particularly the accommodation of marriage that traditionally, and still, undergirds a particular kind of social and spiritual presence in the world. He regarded this stable presence as correlated to the capacity of men and women to create a particular timeframe through marriage that allowed proper space for the birth and development of children and the maturation of important institutions in society.¹⁸

The Trajectory of Healing

Rosenstock-Huessy began here to offer the details for a period of healing, asserting that should healing come, it has to flow toward the source of the sickness in German society. Given the degradation of marriage, the impassioned War of the Sexes (*der Liebeskampf der Leidenschaft*) must be healed. The gifted passions have closed up the source of grace, while the uninspired guardians of the source of mercy, the Christians, had fled Nature or eschewed or pampered Woman. Now the creature that still remains in the realm of humankind, that still has not been received in the established forms of male-dominated Church and State formation—she is the one who will call so that from her the old disintegrating, decaying world of spirit may receive new impulse and new life. (40)

Healing has already in an instant been prepared wherever ruin and corruption have appeared. Just as Prometheus completed the great revolution (in France), the poet (Goethe) presciently let the natural Daughter be kept in silence and seclusion for the rescue of the nation. He proclaimed the trans-heathen but also trans-Christian thing: the Eternal Womanly (Feminine) draws us upward. Earthly Love shall be absolved. Because of this the limits of revealed law were broken: it was the beautiful Jewess (Ruth), whom the nation “peculiar” to God (Judah) accepted into the community of the people, into Christian society. An until now self-understood barrier—Christianity—was shattered. The Jews, the people of God, the guardians of the Law, saw the door bolt broken, the one that Abraham's Seed had preserved up until now. It destroyed not only the barriers of heritage and nationality. It also shattered the pattern of marital union, for then the heathen line of honor was shattered, the mortal enmity set between two men who loved the same woman. A part of the world was overcome here that appeared indestructible as Nature. The limits of all earthly forms were open before the omnipotence of divine power. Love was the power that taught the man, over the barriers of his recognition, his belief, over and above the honor of his people and constraints of his marriage, that he could find a brother even among rivals. Love is stronger than Blood and Sacrament,

for they are “passed away.”¹⁹ It is the embarrassment that overturns and places upon new foundations the apparently already regulated life. (40-41)

Rosenstock-Huessy provided examples of “revolutionary” couples such as Goethe and Marianne von Willemer, Bismarck and Marie von Blankenburg, and Wagner and Mathilde Wesendonck—a curious sampling suggesting infatuation or frustrated love, and not as married couples, though the women were married to other men. Perhaps he had in mind these couples as comprised of admiring and inspired collaborators on common interests, presumably regarded as equals. It is unclear precisely what he meant; however, perhaps he wrote provocatively to illustrate a possibility that the theologians did not see when they defined love conceptually or as a spiritual abstraction. Might these pairs be counterexamples to the cultural norm as well as examples of the potential for transformed relationships in which men are not simply men, and women are not merely women? (41)

The parallel for the devastated men of Germany in 1920, however, is about the intervention of Woman, more specifically of the Wife, or wives, to help Germans to recover the spirit they lost in the war, and actually to be servants of the Spirit of God. “Already now the power by which Christ has come, to the wife, of the wife, that he avoids, the earthly love, the earthly beloved. She herself grows so that she loves him, the one who has become powerless, the Man, so that shattering power reaches down upon the spiritually forsaken earth, and is able to seize him, in order to transform him and her sister.” (41)

There was the danger that there would be no such power able to apprehend, to seize us. To know about the healing stream but not to apprehend it would have to be hellish torture. But a discounted resource is near. Rosenstock-Huessy asserted that salvation tends to come around when no one is waiting for it, from the abandoned, from the impossible. Salvation could come only where no person could work it out by wit alone, so that salvation could not be explained from within the Creation but had to result from divine entry to the Creation. (42)

Man had fled Woman (Middle Ages) or he had shackled her (Modernity) or he had—as God was dead—ridiculed her. The woman is our earthly portion and the suitable redemption of the man. She has involved herself below in earthly activity and involved the man in the activity of the marketplace, so she is one who avoids the kind of man who strives after holiness and purity as opposed to down-to-earth living. That is why, with many sighs, she takes up the role of being the family burden or an angry, domineering or quarrelsome woman (*Hauskreuz*), with any man who battles against the world. That is why she scoffs at the Overman who sees his own “divine nature” as being in danger from her. (42)

Now then the Man through the Woman shall receive faith through the grace of God. For him who only sees what has happened must really be changing and has to marvel at his new ability to believe. God heals the mistake that Christianity has made with the healing his Son has accomplished, in that he grasped the latter portion of his Creation, the mediator, the Woman, immediately with the Stream of his life. By doing so, he reversed the circumstances (*Verhältnis*) and shamed the pride of man. (42)

“Today it is not the spirit of the Law that heals us, that afflicts us with a deluge of water; water is powerless,” he writes. Only blood replaces or restores blood; only

the sap of life creates or produces life. God has preserved the most secret vessel, the most discreet, Woman, honors her today, breaks the portion in earthly and heavenly love and calls the Woman as Wife to his divine work of love on earth. Therefore, "Attend carefully to your own spirit, and do not be disloyal to the wife of your youth."²⁰ (42-43)

The hour of the Daughter and the Beloved has come. She who until now has not called out the hour in the striking of the clock of salvation history; she, who always was ready at the feet of this manly history of the spirit and remained there, today hears the voice of the Father in Heaven. (43)

Because, knowing that they are his sons, his sons nevertheless have betrayed (*verraten*) him. They have lied in their Church- and State- and pride of genius when they aver that with God no thing is impossible, for the Spirit has become poison to them. Now the Bride calls them. The Creation cannot really find peace until the Man sees heavenly and earthly love reconciled together in himself. The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come".²¹ The Daughter of Mankind, fashioned from the rib of the Man, today steps away from of his guardianship and immediately under the Father in Heaven as His Daughter so that she may be Bride to Man, the loving bride. (43)

*Oh, how I wish that you were my little brother, nursing at my mother's breasts; if I saw you outside, I could kiss you – surely no one would despise me! . . . Set me like a cylinder seal over your heart, like a signet on your arm. For love is as strong as death, passion is as unrelenting as Sheol. Its flames burst forth, it is a blazing flame. Surging waters cannot quench love; floodwaters cannot overflow it.*²² And because love happens to the man, he thanks God that he gives to him the power/strength for life. So then, he acknowledges with tears of joy that he still can to love, that his heart is still not dead, that God has suddenly from his death he is allowed to live again. *Love is strong as death.* From here forward the prodigal son finds his home in the Creation that he had destroyed.(43)

Rosenstock-Huessy began the conclusion as he had begun *The Daughter*: "We do not tell it to ourselves, because we can no longer say the essential truth out loud." Germans were "seeking a language that no longer needs to be spoken, so that we can wrap it around ourselves so that we do not wither away." And then the verdict, "The empty pride of our spirits, the empty pride of our race (*Blutes*), Church- and State belief give way before the unity of Spirit and Blood in Love. Before the neighborhood of mankind all our false conceptual idols of state, nation, profession and honor and Church are broken together. No part of the world, no battlement, no recognition, no accomplishment of mankind can force itself between God and my nearest neighbor. Rather, as once in the Love-feast,²³ the wonderful way of inward union went over the heart and through the heart, in the brotherly binding together of hearts." (43-44)

There where it appeared as impossibility to us, over the boundaries of our blood, over the barriers of our spirit, there the heart reaches out for a loving wife, who will bear up our souls. And now she holds us fast, we who are crushed, we the outcast; the Healing Stream draws toward us and fills us with its hidden power: We are allowed to stand, where we stand, although we have seen where we stand and where God stands. We men allow it now, to become "We" through the love of the

one wife.²⁴ She forges us together and separates us anew, do that we now love one another and indeed must bear up each other. We cannot be priests to each other, but we can so interlock our hands, so they become intertwined, that we are no more able to live without each other, such that we have to say, "I will not leave you, because you bless him! Here there is no silence, no other burden than to love evermore. For it is real life, precisely.

With these words Rosenstock-Huessy draws his essay to a close. Responding to the failure of male-dominated cultural religion he proposed the rebirth of belief and trust through Woman's clear appeal to the Spirit of God when Man could not do it. To the churchmen of Christendom, regardless of denomination, but particularly those shrouded in religious authoritarianism, he proposed that all people recognize the presence incarnate of the human droplets of faith comprising the source and flood of the Holy Spirit over the centuries. To the weight and force of manly and nationalist spirits he countered with the proposal that such spirits actually emanate from a false spirituality and a faith in the powers of men that cannot sustain reality for the sake of the people who are created in the image of God; only the life-force, the heavenly elixir, the surging flood conveying the grammar of Holy Spirit can achieve true and lasting life. To the cultural suppression and humiliation of woman, he countered, proposing that only human, that is to say, particularly masculine, inability to perceive the true nature of women or any other persons continues to be a major failure that has had consistently destructive consequences. Thus the premise that women as equal heirs to the image of God should really be qualified to bring healing and strength, restoration and salvation, through their capacities in faith, particularly to their own husbands.

As to the matter of opposing Nietzsche and finding prompts for encouragement in Goethe, I offer these comments. First, that Rosenstock-Huessy contended with Nietzsche, using the habits of the Overman toward women as counterexamples to his assertions about the unrecognized value of Woman in an unbalanced culture. Second, as Rosenstock-Huessy expressed it, man and woman were fashioned equally in the likeness of God, that the bodily expressions of love for God and between man and wife alone are established for mankind, for humanity, and that these expressions are "his two great embodiments on earth." In this statement Rosenstock-Huessy he affirmed his confidence in the "grammar of the Spirit"²⁵ that effects God's own incarnation in and through humankind.

Biographical Note

Jerry L. Summers, Ph.D., is the Sam B. Hall Professor of History and Dean of the School of Humanities at East Texas Baptist University in Marshall, where he has served since 1991. He has been married forty-four years to his wife Debra; they have two children and five grandchildren.

¹ *Die Hochzeit des Krieges und der Revolution* (Würzburg: Patmos Verlag, 1920).

² Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *Die Tochter*, and Martin Buber, transl., *Das Buch Rut*, ed. By Bas Leenman, with commentary (Mössingen-Talheim, Germany: Talheimer Verlag, 1988), 9; „Die

Tochter“ is a chapter in *Die Hochzeit des Krieges*, pp. 270-288, and appears digitally in *Orientierung des dritten Jahrtausends 4/5* (Argo Press, 1986): 45-63; Reel 13, Item 605.

³ *Die Tochter*, 9.

⁴ *Die Tochter*, 9-10.

⁵ Eugen Rosenstock and Margrit Huessy, married since 1915, officially combined their surnames in the 1930s after migrating to the United States.

⁶ "Einleitung" by Bas Leenman, in *Die Tochter und Das Buch Rut*, 28.

⁷ Raymond Huessy, "The Polish Vita", Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy Fund, <http://www.erhfund.org/the-polish-vita-2001/> Accessed January 22, 2020.

⁸ In this article I will present the content of *The Daughter* in summaries, loose translations, paraphrases, and frequent quotations.

⁹ (Citations from *The Daughter* are in-text; further references appear in the notes. All translations are mine.) Rosenstock-Huessy, recognizing the natural tendency to long for the good times now long past, spoke to the value of formal, that is to say, formative speech, thus: "The cry for peace and order is a desperate cry. Shouting for freedom and for regeneration of the good old days is of the utmost violence. The lullabies and sugar coating of common sense are not acceptable to crying, weeping, shouting, raging people. They must experience the miracle of seeing the dead come to life again, and foes become friends, and dissent become agreement, and shouts become new words. They must see and hear and touch before they believe. Formal speech produces exactly these miracles. The dead seem to come to life, shouts become prayers, foes come to terms; inner dissent becomes harmonious song of strophe and antistrophe, of dialogue and chorus." *The Origin of Speech* (Argo Books, 1981; reprint, Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013), 31.

¹⁰ *Marriage of War and Revolution*, "July 1917", 2.

¹¹ A cavalcade of modern thinkers in the wake of Descartes could qualify, but most likely he referred to D. F. Strauss, Albert Schweitzer, and Ernst Renan. Of the latter two, Marion Davis Battles referred to them as representing "the triumph of Gnosis, the mind as the creator of real fact, the triumph of re-creating history as it might have been, and believing that it was that way." *The Fruit of Lips or Why Four Gospels*, ed. by Marion Davis Battles (Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series, gen ed. Dikran Y. Hadidan; Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 1978), xi.

¹² Matthew 9:17.

¹³ While discussing Jesus, his disciples and the order of the gospels, Rosenstock-Huessy delivered an indirect but relevant statement for this point on seeing Woman as more just "woman": "That the world sees not us but our worldly function first is the experience of any living soul. We first are visible by our least essential features. The outer man is known before the inner; the historical acts are known before their long-term meaning." Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *The Fruit of Lips*, 41.

¹⁴ Sils Maria is the Swiss resort town where Nietzsche lived during many summers.

¹⁵ Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *The Multiformality of Man* (Essex, VT: Argo Books, 2000; earlier editions 1936, 1948, 1973). The central emphases of *The Multiformality of Man* appear in a brief, clear chapter by George Allen Morgan in his *Speech and Society: The Christian Linguistic Social Philosophy of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1987), 14-16.

¹⁶ M. Darrol Bryant, "The Grammar of the Spirit: Time, Speech, and Society," in M. Darrol Bryant and Hans R. Huessy, eds., *Toronto Studies in Theology*, Vol. 28, Lewiston, New York, and Queenston, Ontario: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), 248. See further discussion at Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *In the Cross of Reality*, Vol. 1, *The Hegemony of Spaces*, ed. by Wayne Cristaudo and Frances Huessy, transl. by Jürgen Lawrenz (New York: Transaction Publishers/Taylor and Francis, 2017), 201-208.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*; see also Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *Out of Revolution: Autobiography of Western Man* (Providence, RI, and Oxford, UK, 1969; reprint Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013), 455

¹⁸ Rosenstock-Huessy wrote elsewhere about the intentional function and balance possible between men and women: "Sex rips open the greatest natural cleft between humans. [. . .] The tragic clefts of our time are usually considered to be those between capital and labor, white and colored, and the educated and uneducated. I don't believe that. I think the war between the sexes threatens to extinguish us. We are threatened in our very existence by the Don Juan and the philanderer in every man, by the loose woman and the controlling female [*Despotion*] in every woman—and not only occasionally, but every day. These men and women must decide every day

anew to combat their jealousy, their lust, their desires, their craving for domination, even though they all emanate directly from the same creative force that constitutes the magnificence of our manhood and womanhood. The sources of our greatest joys and the daily genesis of new life are also the sources of our greatest dangers and a daily threat to society. . . . When the sexes fail to attain peace, humankind suffers devastation. *In the Cross of Reality*, Vol. 1, *The Hegemony of Spaces*, 210-211.

¹⁹ 2 Corinthians 5:17

²⁰ Malachi 2:15b

²¹ Revelation 22:17b

²² Song of Solomon 8:1, 6-7a; in NET Bible, 1st ed. (Biblical Studies Press, LLC;

www.bible.org, 1996).

²³ I Corinthians 11:20-34; Jude 12.

²⁴ Though not specifically related to *The Daughter*, consider another comment responding to *The Flight from Woman* of Karl Stern that supports the “harmony of male and female faculties” in intuitive knowing and suits the current theme appropriately: “He sees in this *womanhood*, this ‘holy passivity’, a kind of readiness for annunciation and so a hidden resource which is a sign of contradiction, a denial of the cynical logistics, the exploitation and triviality and voyeurism of the world. The poet’s eye is the truly human eye, caring for the living and irreducible quality of all beings and in its innocent openness it is a prelude to a more complete faith, which sees men not as objects but as Israel, the Spouse, the Bride. And to this kind of insight we are led by a spirit of openness, of eternal womanhood, ‘das Ewig-Weibliche’ of Goethe. . . . This actuality of individual being in things has to be evoked, not measured.” J. E. Stewart, “The Flight to Woman,” *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 47 No. 55 (August 1966), 591-593.

²⁵ Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *Practical Knowledge of the Soul*, trans. by Mark Huessy and Freya von Moltke (Norwich, Vermont: Argo Books, 1988), 36, 56.

Religion's Staple Dish is Best Served with a Plate of Death!: An Exploration Into the Absence of Death and its Effects on Religion and Society

*Nicholas Elliott
University of Saint Thomas*

“Without death all we have are random events, accumulation, you can’t call that life. If you have a reason for living then you have to kill me”.

- C.C., Code Geass: Lelouch of the Rebellion R2

“Everything, I suppose, turns to dust eventually. A man’s memories end up in some attic or in a Salvation Army bin. His name becomes a fleeting statistic and his face is lost in fading photographs, the clothing quaint, the anecdotes gone.”

– *Obasan* (Kogawa, 1994, p. 30)

Abstract

Although scholars such as Kubler-Ross, Ernest Becker, and Otto Rank have in brief, examined the effects of death on mainstream religion, in addition to its effect on the origin of religion, no scholar is currently known to detail in a more extensive manner the coexistent relationship of death and religion and its effects on society. In recent decades, medical institutes from around the world have taken large leads towards large steps to eradicating death in its many forms and configurations in order to enhance the greater good and health of people in their country. However, this paper aims to critique the argument using a multidisciplinary perspective which will draw information from several disciplines including psychology, sociology, and thanatology among other disciplines that the notion of eradicating death from society is a social good. In order to critique the previous statement, this paper will argue that the elimination of death from society presents a great risk to the social institutions of religion that aid in forming the social infrastructure that forms the backbone of social society.

Introduction

Suppose that the world is just as we know it, with one exception: Death is no longer inevitable. Disease and aging have been conquered. Let us also suppose that air and water pollution have been much reduced through new technologies. Take a few minutes to imagine the implications and consequences. What will happen? How will people respond to this situation, individually and as a society? How will the quality of life change? (Kastenbaum, 1992, p. 49).

This is a thought experiment proposed by the psychologist Robert Kastenbaum, called *A World Without Death*, allowed participants to find significance in death and additionally challenge their own beliefs (1992, p. 49). Out of six hundred

participants, only one of twenty saw a world without death in a positive state; the rest approaching seventy percent saw the world within a negative state (Kastenbaum, 1992, p. 49). Some of the negative reactions concerned such things as controlling who can have babies, possible overcrowding, and that economic structures would change drastically probably in a negative way (Kastenbaum, 1992, p. 51).

Individuals, Kastenbaum has shown very often take a pessimistic view of a life with no death (1992); however, life where death is present, is not very different as the Swiss-American physician Elisabeth Kubler-Ross makes note of in her 1969 book, *On Death and Dying*. In the book, Kubler-Ross writes of companies that attempted to make money off of people's fear of death (p. 16). These companies included remedies to death, such as cryotherapy and the replacement of organic human organs for mechanical organs (Kubler-Ross, 1969, p. 15-16). This extension in life, notes Kubler-Ross, led to a decline in the belief of the religious afterlife because suffering has decreased due to the increase in technologies that can extend people's life (1969, p. 15).

Today the mentality of trying to avoid or deny death is still very much alive and has been updated through advancement in scientific understanding, medical technique, and technology. In her paper, "Cryonics suspension—debating life finitude, extending time capital and canceling death," scholar Oana Mara Stan discusses what she refers to as the "anti-death movement" (2016). The philosophic position of the "anti-death movement," is that death is an unnecessary punishment that is wrong morally and thus should be avoided (Stan, 2016, p.75). According to Stan (2016) members who engage in the anti-death movement operate under either of two unique outlooks of life extension: Biologic or Digital (p.76). Biologic life extension involves activities such as cryonics and is understood through the notion that the line between the living and the dead is not fixed but thin and flexible. Furthermore, according to the philosophical perspective of biologic life extensionists the person is not dead until information is erased beyond recognition (i.e., death is believed to be reversible, not final) (Stan, 2016, p.76). Digital life extension involves transferring the person's consciousness into a robotic extension of the self (Stan, 2016, p.76). Furthermore, digital life extensionists call to quantum mechanics as they believe by using "indiscernible particles" and the robotic extension as a core they can remake the person (or organism) from cloned atoms (Stan, 2016, p.76).

This anti-death mentality occurs along-side the medical community's efforts to do no harm and eradicate death in its many forms. All these attempts to suppress or remove death from society ultimately in time will give society a problem that is not immediately noticeable. One such problem, concerns the fact that all religions currently known to science are built on death in order to deal with the consequences of death and the afterlife. With the absence of death, this lack of a serious question could seriously cripple if not destroy religions all across the world. This paper will attempt to accomplish three tasks: a.) To explicate the concept and wickedness of death; b.) to show how the concept of death is related to religion, and c.) to explain in a comprehensive manner how the absence of death can lead to the suffering of religion in addition to society.

Literature Review

Death: What is it? The Psychoanalytic's Examination of Death

According to Slaughter (2005), the first published research on the children's understanding of death was done by psychoanalytic researchers who worked from a primarily psychoanalytic perspective. The research revealed two facts. First, that the concept of death is emotionally charged as an issue and when thrust upon children, the response emotions is fear, anxiety, and sadness, because children are afraid of the separation of death; children's emotional responses have been found to be similar to that of adults (Slaughter, 2005, p. 179). Second, children tend to understand death differently than adults, and before about 10 years of age the child tends to think of death as separation, a family member going away to heaven or a person going to a place specially designated towards housing the dead (Slaughter, 2005, p. 179). Research also showed that children could have the knowledge that a person is dead; however, the child has rationalized the permanence of being separated from the deceased as a result that heaven was too far or that the coffin was nailed shut (Slaughter, 2005, p. 179). In order to deal with death, children often personify death as beings such as the grim reaper or the boogeyman that only come to get older people (Slaughter, 2005, p. 179). Also, children have also been reported to think that death is a punishment for a crime or wrongdoing (Slaughter, 2005, p. 180). Researchers of this first psychoanalytic wave tended to understand that children's misapprehensions that surround their understanding of death were due to the child's immature cognitive and emotional development (Slaughter, 2005, p. 180).

A study done by Maria Nagy set much of the tone for the rest of the research done in subsequent decades (Kastenbaum, 2000). Nagy in Budapest interviewed 378 children, years three to ten years old (Kastenbaum, 2000; Nagy, 1948). Children above seven years old were asked to write down everything that comes to mind when thinking about death (Kastenbaum, 2000; Nagy, 1948).

Nagy's three stages of death understanding:

1. Stage one: up to about age 5

Death and Departure – The child does not see death as the final stage of life. Death is also seen as connected to the departure of a person.

2. Stage two: between the ages of 5 and 9

Death, Quickness, and Law-Abiding Citizen – The child recognizes that death is the end of life. However, children believe that if they are quick enough then they would be able to escape death and live forever.

3. Stage three: ages 9 and 10 (and, presumably, thereafter)

Inevitability and Universality – The child now understands that death is final and non-escapable. (Kastenbaum, 2000; 1948)

The Subcomponents/Components of Death

In the 1960s and 1970s research shifted from a psychoanalytic to a Piagetian perspective; the research was more systematic and was based more on cognitive than

on emotional aspects of understanding death (Slaughter, 2005, p. 180). Across numerous studies, researchers found seven distinct subcomponents of the complex concept of death to include the following:

(a) irreversibility or finality, the understanding that the dead cannot come back to life; (b) universality or applicability, the understanding that all living things (and only living things) die and related (c) personal mortality, the understanding that death applies to oneself; (d) inevitability, the understanding that all living things must die eventually; (e) cessation or non-functionality, the understanding that bodily and mental functions cease after death; (f) causality, the understanding that death is ultimately caused by a breakdown of bodily function; (g) unpredictability, the understanding that the timing of (natural) death is not knowable in advance. (Slaughter, 2005, p. 180)

Although mastery of all seven of these subcomponents of death would mean that an individual had a mature understanding of death (Slaughter, 2005, p. 180). Each subcomponent or set thereof was found independent of others by different researchers, and no researcher included all seven subconcepts within a single study (Slaughter, 2005, p. 180).

According to Slaughter (2005), studies show a regular development pattern that irreversibility and universality were usually the first subconcepts to be understood by young children around the age of five or six years of age (p. 180). While cessation and causality have been known to be the last subconcepts to be understood (Slaughter, 2005, p. 180). Although the acquisition of subcomponents may be influenced by the child's background socio-cultural environment and unique life experiences, each stage is strongly tied towards the present level of cognition competency (Slaughter, 2005).

Across many studies, researchers claim that mastery of all seven subconcepts stated above can result in an individual having a mature understanding of death, as noted by Slaughter (2005); Speece (1995) wrote that the number of components tends to differ between researchers. However, according to Speece (1995), the four components of death that make up a majority of the research are universality, irreversibility, nonfunctionality, and causality (Speece, 1995). Within his article Speece defines each of the four components listed below as the following:

Universality – “Universality refers to the understanding that all living things must eventually die.”

Irreversibility – “Irreversibility refers to the understanding that once the physical body dies it cannot be made alive again.”

Nonfunctionality – “Nonfunctionality refers to the understanding that once a living thing dies all of the typical life-defining capabilities of the living physical body (e.g., walking, eating, hearing, seeing, thinking, and learning) cease.”

Causality – “Causality involves an abstract and realistic understanding of the external and internal events that might possibly cause an individual's death.” (1995, para. 6-10)

Within the same article, “Children’s Conception of Death,” Speece (1995) additionally explores the introduction of another component: Noncorporeal Continuation. Noncorporeal Continuation is the continuation of a person’s life after their body dies and according to Speece (1995), the component rarely is separated due in probable part to the bias of researchers who see death as biological.

Although, Speece (1995) notes the existence of four concepts of death, along with the introduction of a new fifth concept, “noncorporeal continuation,” that children must understand in order to have a mature concept of death. However, the fact must be noted that scientists do not have a complete understanding of what a mature understanding actually looks like, as there is no consensus on what a mature understanding of death looks like – under a lens of empirical validation (Speece, 1995). Additionally, researchers have not come to a consensus as to at what age children achieve a mature understanding or at what cognitive capacity one is needed to achieve a state in which one maturely understands death (Hunter & Smith, 2008, p. 150). Although in terms of developmental age, scholars seem to posit ages from around seven (Speece, 1995) to around ten years (Hunter & Smith, 2008, p. 147; Nguyen & Gelman, 2002, p. 496) with no consensus on a single age. Although Nguyen and Rosengren (2004) note that among children three to six years of age the tendency to have misconceptions about biological topics such as life, aging, reproduction, illness, and death is common. Although, these misconceptions are found less prominently among five to six-year-old children compared to children who are three to four-year-olds (Nguyen and Rosengren, 2004). The researchers believe that this probably is because of the need for parents to protect their child from certain types of information present (e.g., reproduction and death) (Nguyen and Rosengren, 2004).

Additionally, according to Slaughter (2005), researchers such as Kane (1979) mapped the progression and the understanding of death in children to the operational stages of cognitive development laid out by Piaget. Although Piaget laid out in his research four distinct “stages” 1. Sensorimotor, 2. Preoperational, 3. Concrete Operational, and 4. Formal Operational, researchers who research children’s understanding of death start with the preoperational stage (Kane, 1979; Slaughter, 2005). Children who are at the preoperational stage tend to think of death in terms of structure (e.g., the person looks still, eyes are closed) and view death as temporary and reversible; at the concrete operational stage children tend to think of death in terms of specific function (e.g., guns, bad behavior, accidents); at the formal operational stage the child can think abstractly using hypothetical and logical reasoning. Moreover this stage is considered by some researchers to be the stage of a mature understanding of death, because this stage actually reflects abstract theoretical biological knowledge (Kane, 1979; Slaughter, 2005).

The Biological Exploration of Death

Within the last couple of decades, cognitive researchers have been looking at how children learn about and understand death cognitively (Slaughter, 2005). Researchers have been exploring the assumption that children actively create folk or naïve theories of the world that are domain-specific towards understanding death (Slaughter, 2005). Cognitive researchers who explore the domain concerned with the understanding of death say that understanding death in a biological paradigm is different from the Piagetian paradigm (Kastenbaum, 2000). The difference comes from the way that children come about understanding death; researchers under the Piagetian paradigm say that children's understanding of death progresses in discreet stages (e.g., preoperational to concrete operational) (Kastenbaum, 2000). But, researchers under the biological paradigm say that children learn continuously overtime acquire an understanding of topics such as death (Kastenbaum, 2000). As children gather more information (as long as it is good information), they will be able to create better and better inferences (Kastenbaum, 2000).

Understanding Plants: A Completed Understanding of Death

Studies done within the examination of figuring out mature concepts of death only have had the subject of the experiment focused on people or animals (Nguyen & Gelman, 2002, p. 496). Nguyen & Gelman note that this lack of plant-based focus shows an incomplete grasp of knowledge of death as a biological process within the scientific literature (2002, p. 496). This is because plants, as the researchers explain: I. are extremely long-lived (e.g., trees); II. are resistant to attempts to kill them and can appear to be revived after being cut or sprayed; III. the lifespan phases of plants do not show the same as in animals; IV. plants can be kept in a state of suspended animation (e.g., seeds or wilted plants); V. unlike animals, plants can have dead portions, but can still be alive (Nguyen & Gelman, 2002, p. 496). However, once children grasp the full process of death, then there will be an understanding that death will include both animals and plants, regardless of the atypicality of the life and death of plants in regards to plants (Nguyen & Gelman, 2002, p. 496).

Adolescents and Adulthood Understanding Death

The realm of the adolescent and their cognitive capacities has rarely been touched, because researchers have assumed that a human's cognitive maturity for understanding death is maintained by adolescence and remains unchanged (Kastenbaum & Costa Jr, 1977). As a change in the field however, there have been a small number of studies that focus on topics such as attitudes, and not a clearly delineated cognition of death; in addition, there has also been a cluster of studies done investigating the linkage between death concern and futurity (Kastenbaum & Costa Jr, 1977). Kastenbaum and Costa Jr (1977) note findings that show adolescents are afraid of their life being ended early as the result of a violent event (p. 232). Tamm & Granqvist (1995) conducted an experiment in which participants of both sexes (age groups: 9, 12, 15, and 18) drew pictures of their interpretation of the word death and

were asked to comment on what they had drawn. Boys rather than girls' interpretation of death, were more likely to be violent and personified, and girls tended to interpret death to be more emotional (e.g., sadness and grief) (Tamm & Granqvist, 1995). After an extensive review of multiple databases of scientific articles there was no mention of an article that referred to or explicated on understanding death in adulthood.

Two Systems of Death Determination – Cardio-Respiratory & Brain Death Cardio-Respiratory

The first set of criteria used attributes of known dysfunctions of the heart and lungs to determine death made up the cardio-respiratory criterion. Many physicians using the Cardio-Respiratory criterion during antiquity would check for a person's pulse. In addition, they would check for breathing by holding a mirror to the face of the person, and if the person was alive condensation would form on the mirror's surface from their breathing. Doctors would even listen to people for signs of breathing (Presidents Commission, 1981; Sarbey, 2016). The cardio-respiratory model used to diagnose death was reflective of the people's conception of death (Presidents Commission, 1981; Sarbey, 2016).

Ad Hoc Committee of the Harvard Medical School

In 1968 a shift in how death was determined came from the Ad Hoc Committee of the Harvard Medical School. In their seminal paper, "A Definition of Irreversible Coma," the committee laid out a basis for a new type of criterion for the recognition and reporting of death, which was the irreversible coma (Ad Hoc Committee of the Harvard Medical School, 1968). The article lays out four distinct points for the diagnosis of an irreversible coma, which are:

1. Unreceptivity and unresponsivity

No response, the person has a total unawareness to external stimuli and inner need.

2. No movements or breathing

The person shows no muscular or respiration related responses towards external stimuli such as pain, light, touch, or sound.

3. No reflexes

A person shows no sign of elicitable reflexes. The pupil will be fixed and dilated showing no response to light of a direct source.

4. Flat electroencephalogram

The flat EEG is to be used as a tool for validating the validity of the person's death. (Ad Hoc Committee of the Harvard Medical School, 1968, p. 337-338; De Georgia, 2014, p. 675)

However, Veatch (2018), explains in his paper that the ad hoc committee that convened at Harvard in 1986 was made up of members that were interested in only one of two principle questions aimed to be answered by the committee: The first question was related to medical fact, "When has a human brain irreversibly ceased

functioning?"; the second question, on the other hand, was not related to medicine but to social policy and was concerned with, "Should we treat individuals with dead brains and beating hearts as dead humans?" Also, all but three of the thirteen members were only capable of claiming expertise on the first question, while the three remaining members could only do so for the second question (Veatch, 2018). This separation of expertise made it hard to examine the interplay between the two differing questions discussed by the committee (Veatch, 2018). Although the committee was important for making a lasting impact in recognition of brain death, the result of the ad hoc committee was quickly attracting doubt and questions from other scholars and scientists for the ability of criteria to diagnosis one's death (Veatch, 2018).

President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems

In 1981, thirteen years after the ad hoc committee published their paper, the U.S. President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research redefined what the criterion for brain death in adults were (Busl & Greer, 2009) in a report titled, *Defining Death: Medical, Legal and Ethical Issues in the Determination of Death*, as the following:

An individual who has sustained either (1) irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions, or (2) irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain, including the brain stem, is dead. A determination of death must be made in accordance with accepted medical standards. (Presidents Commission, 1981, p. 2)

In 2008 the President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems released a new report about the state of their original acceptance of total brain death and the confusion and frustration that came in the decades following afterwards. In the report the committee make the case that total brain death is not acceptable as a term to signify the death of a person. This is due to the practice of declaring brain death and the death of the person as two separate events (i.e., Total Brain Death: 3:00pm. Wednesday; Corpeal death: 5:00pm Friday) although there is only one real phenomenon called death which can be defined as "the transition from being a living, mortal organism to being something that, though dead, retains a physical continuity with the once-living organism" (Pelegirino, 2008). Moreover, the committee also makes the case that brain death implies that it is the brain and its component tissues that matter in death determination (Pelegirino, 2008) however, it should be noted that the determination of death relies upon the confirmation that the individual is dead (e.g., has the person or individual died) (Pelegirino, 2008). Finally, the committee made one last case that death itself not a diagnosis, and the determination of death relies on a selection of appropriate standards that are chosen but are not strictly medical nor technical matters (Pelegirino, 2008). With death not being considered a diagnosis, it would be inappropriate that any name chosen to designate such a position not use the word death in the concept's phrasing (Pelegirino, 2008). The committee recommended that the name be changed from Total Brain Death to Total Brain Failure (Pelegirino, 2008).

Uniform Determination of Death Act

The stated definition and in turn the report, *Defining Death*, continued in bringing forward a shift in the way death was determined, with the report giving validation to brain death as a means of legal death. The legality of the brain death criterion would be codified into U.S. law the same year as the president's commission published *Defining Death*, along with the addition of the Uniform Determination of Death Act. The Uniform Determination of Death Act provides comprehensive bases for determining death in all situations (UDDA, 1981). The three sections of the act go as follows:

S. 1. [Determination of Death]. An individual who has sustained either (1) irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions, or (2) irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain, including the brain stem, is dead. A determination of death must be made in accordance with accepted medical standards.

S. 2. [Uniformity of Construction and Application]. This Act shall be applied and construed to effectuate its general purpose to make uniform the law with respect to the subject of this Act among states enacting it.

S. 3. [Short Title]. This Act may be cited as the Uniform Determination of Death Act. (UDDA, 1981)

Over the next decades, many states adopted statutes on the basis of brain death using an inconsistent definition of death (Veatch, 2018). The inconsistency has led to the ability of the diagnosed dead coming back to life in places where there is no brain death-based statute (Veatch, 2018).

World Health Organization Forum

In 2012, the World Health Organization and the Canadian Blood Services together hosted a forum in an attempt to discern how to determine death on an international level. Like the Ad Hoc Commission, the President's Commission, and the UDDA, the WHO forum focused on death only as a biological event (WHO & CBS, 2012, p.iii). During the forum, the participants came to the agreement of an operational definition of death:

Death is the permanent loss of capacity for consciousness and all brainstem functions. This may result from permanent cessation of circulation or catastrophic brain injury. In the context of death determination, 'permanent' refers to loss of function that cannot resume spontaneously and will not be restored through intervention (Shimie et al., 2014, p. 794)

Beyond the End of Line – When Dead Does Not Equal Death

Researchers and medical practitioners who once thought that death was the end of the line for individuals are witnessing an expansion within studies of biology and metabolomics (i.e., study of metabolites found within cells). Researchers have been finding that when individuals die, cells in several organs such as the liver, heart, and kidney could still continue fighting for energy up to twenty-four hours after an organisms' point of death (Mora-Ortiz, 2019). Additionally, the brain, as studied by Vrselja and colleagues, showed the ability to repair the existing architecture in addition to maintaining the activity of cells that are still existent four hours post-death through mechanical assistance (2019).

When the government advanced the position of Total Brain Death in opposition to the cardio-respiratory criteria in their report "Defining Death" in 1981, they did so with the intention of aiding the medical community in the practice of organ extraction and donation. However, the transition has not gone so smoothly because, advances in life-saving technology and the lack of understanding of Total Brain Death have led towards compelling findings. Dr. Alan Shewmon notes that death, as denoted by brain death, is recognized as falling into one of three categories:

Essentially biological, predicated of the "organism as a whole" by virtue of loss of somatic integrative unity, and species-nonspecific

Essentially psychological, predicated of the human person (equated with mind) by virtue of irreversible loss of consciousness, and species-specific

Essentially sociological, predicated of legal persons by virtue of cessation of societally conferred membership in the human community, and culture-specific (Shewmon, 2001, p. 458)

Brain Death is normally viewed as a biological phenomenon by medical and religious institutions, in addition to philosophical and legal groups (Shewmon, 2001, p. 458). Death as a biological phenomenon is seen as a form of rationale for "brain death" (Shewmon, 2001); however, this position does run into some problems when taken alone without considering together the psychological or the sociological categories when it comes to understanding the phenomenon. One problem that Total Brain Death runs into is the trouble recognizing if the patient is truly alive or dead, due to several factors that bridge the borders between life and death. When the body of a total brain dead patient is supported artificially through the aid of life-preserving machines, the body can show signs of restoration (healing), temperature control, proportional growth, sexual maturation, fetal gestation, immune response, cardiovascular and hormonal response to stress, elimination, energy balancing, and homeostasis (Shewmon, 2001). Although, according to Shewmon (1998) chronic survival of patients who have suffered from brain death does not always require the most heroic people nor sophisticated machines (p. 1543). For example, the mean survival time of individuals suffering from brain death was increased by twenty-three

days, when vasopressin was added to epinephrine (Yoshioka, Sugimoto, & Uenishi, et al., as cited in Shewmon, 1998).

Death and Religion

Studying Death and Religion: Superhuman powers vs religious worldview

Several theorists, academics, and scientists including Becker (1997); Frankl (1963); Fromm (1961); Kubler-Ross (1969); Smith (2017); Vail, Rothschild, Weise, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Greenberg (2010) have referred to, mentioned, or theorized about the protective effects of religion in the face of death or in regard to the terror that surrounds the individual in the world. For example Smith (2017) in his book, *Religion: What it Is, How it Works, and Why it Matters*, defines religion as “a complex of culturally prescribed practices, based on premises about the existence and nature of superhuman powers, whether personal or impersonal, which seek to help practitioners gain access to and communicate or align themselves with these powers realizing human goods and avoiding things bad” (p. 22). Moreover, Smith (2017), defines superhuman powers as “powers [(e.g., controlling the weather, getting good grades on an exam)] that are thought to be able to control or influence significant parts of reality that are usually beyond human intervention” (p. 22). People use these powers to protect themselves or others while also using them to further advance the lives of those around them (e.g., friends, family, acquaintances, loved ones). According to this view, people might use religion to try to gain superhuman powers in order to influence the outcome of an individual’s death or life. Meanwhile, academics including Becker (1997); Vail, Rothschild, Weise, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Greenberg (2010) have noted the protective effects of worldviews in regard to religion when it comes to the prospects of terror and death. To these academics religion was constructed in order to provide not only a protected worldview but also a key towards immortality for the individuals who believe in said religion (Becker, 1997; Vail, Rothschild, Weise, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Greenberg, 2010). This immortality found within religion has been found to be found within places which include for example heaven, Valhalla, or Nirvana, to provide a couple of examples, and can be seen as a form of noncorporeal continuation (See Speece 1995 for further information on noncorporeal continuation).

The Application of Religion to Death: Social Constructionism

In Kitzinger & Kitzinger (2014), the authors note that death is continuously evolving due to the progression and evolution of technology. The authors utilize in their essay a perspective known as social constructionism which looks at the way individuals within a socio-historical context construct items within society such as race, sex, gender, religion, and death just to name a few. Berger (1990), outlines the process of social construction as the culmination of three different ideas or steps: Externalization is the creation of products of cultural importance through social means, and after being made the made objects become external to the individuals that made them; Objectivation happens when the products created by externalization take on a

reality of their own, and the products become independent of the individuals who created them; Internalization refers to the practice of learning and internalizing of “objective” information or facts about the cultural objects made (p. 4). Kitzinger & Kitzinger (2014) argue that death as a social construction has been expanded and morphed, creating liminal beings that exist between life and death located in ambiguity (p. 241). The social construction of death has been the results of the improvements at the intersection between medicine and better technology. Two examples the authors give are the vegetative diagnostic state which was created in the early 1970’s and the minimally conscious state which was defined in 2002. (p. 239). This construction of death makes the recognition of the absolute point of death from of life difficult to accomplish (Kitzinger & Kitzinger, 2014, p. 241). The recognition of death as a social construction can be hard not just on families but also on certain religious groups such as Christians, Muslims, Jews (Miller, Ziad-Miller, & Elamin, 2014), Shinto, and Buddhists (Mizuno & Slingsby, 2007). The difficulty for religion groups comes from the necessary and grounded recognition of the full removal of the biological (Rady, 2019) or spiritual qualities for life (Mizuno & Slingsby, 2007). However, when the individual dies, the individual may not show the loss of all biological or spiritual qualities necessary for life, which as a socially constructed fact while also being western may not fit well with the natural worldview of certain religious groups, as the one’s mentioned above, making the information hard and arduous to understand (Kitzinger & Kitzinger, 2014).

Religions often help individuals to create sense and clarity from the lack of meaning present within the world, helping to aid the individual in the continuation of their life. In the sense of social constructionism, the worldview of religion helps to provide a clear delineated choice in the face of the terror of ambiguousness presented by the branching possibilities of death (e.g., vegetative state, minimally conscious state) (Vail, Rothschild, Weise, Solomon, Pyszczyński, & Greenberg, 2010). A religious worldview creates filter for the incoming information to provide a solid base for the individual and their decision-making process, a pivotal mechanism that allows individuals anxiety to be maintained (Vail, Rothschild, Weise, Solomon, Pyszczyński, & Greenberg, 2010).

Rise of the Wicked Problems

Originating in the discipline of public policy, wicked problems are structurally complex and systematic problems that contain no inherent definition. Instead problems that are wicked are classified around the foundation of ten basic principles set out in a 1973 paper by Rittel and Webber called, “Dilemmas in General Sense of Planning.” These ten principles of wicked problems are as follows:

- I. There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem
- II. Wicked problems have no stopping rule
- III. Solutions to wicked problems are not true-or-false, but good-or-bad
- IV. There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem
- V. Every solution to a wicked problem is a "one-shot operation"; because there is no opportunity to learn by trial-and-error, every attempt counts significantly

VI. Wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan

VII. Every wicked problem is essentially unique

VIII. Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem

IX. The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways. The choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem's resolution

X. The planner has no right to be wrong (Rittel & Webber, 1973)

Wicked problems are complex problems that encompass many areas of society, such as climate change, obesity, and land degradation (ASPC, 2019). However, according to the Australia Public Service Commission, policy problems such as the ones listed above are found to lie somewhere in between the designations of tame and wicked (ASPC, 2019).

According to Brian Head a researcher in public policy, the wickedness of a problem can be thought to be found at the intersection of three different concepts: The first being complexity in relation to elements, subsystems, and interdependencies; then next being uncertainty in relation with risks, consequences of action, and changing patterns; finally divergence which is in relation to fragmentation in viewpoints, values, and strategic intentions (2008, p. 103). Problems that are wicked in their nature are usually taken on by the government in cases by politicians who wish to seem decisive (Head, 2008, p. 107). However, other politicians may wish to take a more conservative approach to avoid overcommitting the government to finding solutions that perhaps will not solve the problem at hand (Head, 2008, p. 107). When politicians often tackle wicked problems, the politician will tend to tackle only the pieces of the problem that are highly visible or tangible (Head, 2008, p. 107), although this method of taking care of these kinds of problems is opposed to the systemic structure of the overall problem (Head, 2008).

The Australian Government notes that, for wicked problems, there are typically three methods that are used to manage these types of problems:

[A]uthoritative strategies. These give the problem to some group (or an individual), who take on the problem-solving process while others agree to abide by its decisions. Identification of this small set of stakeholders may rest on their knowledge and expertise, organisational position in the hierarchy, information or coercive power. An essential ingredient is that other stakeholders acquiesce in the transfer of power to the anointed few and agree or are forced to abide by their decisions. Examples include the High Court decision around native title and Reserve Bank decisions around interest rates. Such authoritative strategies can also be useful in emergency situations.

[C]ompetitive strategies. Central to the pursuit of such strategies is the search for power, influence and market share—stakeholders following this strategy generally assume a win-lose outcome. The competitive federalism of the Australian system can result in this approach, for example, when the States compete for foreign and local investment.

[C]ollaborative strategies. These are supported by the bulk of the literature [...] as being the most effective in dealing with wicked problems that have many stakeholders amongst whom power is dispersed. It is particularly relevant where part of the solution to the problem involves sustained behavioural change by many stakeholders and/or citizens. At the core of collaboration is a win-win view of problem-solving. Partnerships, joint ventures, whole of (or joined up) government, international treaties and information campaigns to influence lifestyle choices are all variations on this strategy. (ASPC, 2019)

Analysis

Death is complex and wicked: Death is a moment, a process, we are death-denying (Becker, 1997), we are death aware (Kastenbaum, 1979), improvements in technology and medicine change and morph death and its features (Kitzinger & Kitzinger, 2014), death is cardio-respiratory (President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1981), death is not cardio-respiratory (Pelegriano, 2008; President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1981) death is brain death (President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1981), death is not brain death (Pelegriano, 2008; Shewmon, 1998, 2001; Veatch, 2018). The essence of death is integrated into every other problem present to date, such as major accidents, obesity, crime, homelessness, abortion, abuse, drug use and drug abuse, overworking, overcrowding, medical malpractice, hazing, and discrimination, all of which are classified as wicked problems that are complex.

Death is, like all the other issues listed a wicked problem, and cannot be eliminated easily. The problem of death is that it is systemic in nature and tackling the problem means tackling the whole problem, not just little pieces or sections of the problem. However, the problem with tackling death in this manner is that no individual has an idea of how death works. Jeff Mason, a philosopher, wrote in *Philosophy Magazine* that no one is an expert on death, because the fact is that everyone starts from the same place, which is ignorance, as the individual is born (Mason, 2015). Moreover, in regard to death, the range of viewpoints are wide and varied and often contradicting between scientists, academics, and even between different disciplines. Additionally, some groups of religious practice hold perspectives on death and often conflict with viewpoints held by the scientific community. It should also be noted that there are also some viewpoints of medical students, doctors, and physicians that are not even correct because the ever-changing and complicating nature of death is misunderstood and/or misinterpreted.

To combat the wickedness of death, the best tactic is known to be cooperation; however, there is serious doubt that this would actually work in this case, as death is a very complex and nuanced issue that individuals, scientists, or persons of religion have a hard time agreeing upon. Additionally, in many societies, death is considered a taboo subject to discuss, making for a lack of communication in the public but behind closed doors, death is discussed as a topic for professionals.

It is not known presently whether the problem of death can ever be solved as the problem itself is so fragmented and conflicting, but once the problem of death goes, then religion will definitely be next to fall. Religion and death are intertwined in various tangible and intangible ways, from doing rituals to worldviews designed to protect individuals from the terror of incoming death. From the research done for this paper, religion might begin to fall from the mainstream religious organizations (e.g., churches, mosques, synagogues) and proceed in a simultaneous fashion towards both a macro level of society (e.g., social institutions, organizations) and a micro-level of society (e.g., symbols, interactions, worldviews). The simultaneous track that the demolition of religion takes comes from the ubiquity of death within society and the fact that religion is very close in proximate in distance and very symbiotic in nature.

Death is often seen as a liberating force that can liberate things, ideas, events, and can promote or halt change. Moreover, death is often seen as the antagonist to religion, which is often viewed within a conservative viewpoint and works to prevent change and death from getting its hands-on society. Death presents the population of a society with meaning for its symbolism and objects by presenting the individuals that make up that population with limited lifetimes. However, death allows for the propensity to construct new symbolism and objects over time as the old lifespan fades out, and new ones fade in, thus allowing for new ideas to formulate within the renewed population. Religion often acts as a conservative factor for society, often attempting to limit the meaning of symbolism and objects. This factor of conservatism that comes from religion can help to create a feeling of safety and move away from the reality of death that can accompany the futurity of the unknown.

Biographical Note

Nicholas Elliott graduated from Stephen F. Austin in 2018 with an undergraduate degree in Multidisciplinary studies, where his areas of pursuit were psychology, sociology, and anthropology. He is currently attending the University of St. Thomas and is working towards a Master's degree in general psychology within the Master's in Liberal Arts program. Personal interests include watching anime, conducting Internet-based research, as well as playing the guitar. Current research interests are set primarily within the realm of anime and consist of anime and religion, the sociology of anime, and the globalizing effect of anime in the United States.

References

- Ad Hoc Committee of the Harvard Medical School. (1968). A definition of irreversible coma: Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Harvard Medical School to examine the definition of brain death. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 205(6), 337–340.
- Australian Public Service Commission (APSC). (2019). Tackling wicked problems: A public policy perspective. Retrieved from <https://www.apsc.gov.au/tackling-wicked-problems-public-policy-perspective>
- Becker, E. (1997). *The denial of death*. The Free Press.
- Berger, P. L. (1990). *The sacred canopy: Elements of a sociological theory of religion*. Anchor Books
- Busl, K. M., & Greer, D.M. (2009). Pitfalls in the diagnosis of brain death. *Neurocritical Care*, 11, 276-287.
- Christian, S. (2017). *Religion: What it is, how it works, and why it matters*. Princeton University Press.

- De Georgia, M. A. (2014). History of brain death as death: 1968 to the present. *Journal of critical care, 29*(4), 673-678.
- Frankl, V. (1963). *A man's search for meaning*. Pocket Books.
- Fromm, E. (1961). *Religion and psychoanalysis*. Yale University Press.
- Head, B. (2008). Wicked problems in public policy. *Public Policy, 3*(2), 101-118.
- Hunter, S. B., & Smith, D. E. (2008). Predictors of children's understandings of death: Age, cognitive ability, death experience and maternal communicative competence. *OMEGA — Journal of Death and Dying, 57*(2), 143-162.
- Inagaki, K., & Hatano, G. (2006). Young children's conception of the biological world. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 15*(4), 177-181.
- Kane, B. (1979). Children's concepts of death. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology, 134*(1), 141-153.
- Kastenbaum, R., & Costa Jr, P. T. (1977). Psychological perspectives on death. *Annual Review of psychology, 28*(1), 225-249.
- Kastenbaum, R. (1992). *The psychology of death* (2nd ed.). Springer.
- Kastenbaum, R. (2000). *The psychology of death* (3rd ed.). Springer.
- Kitzinger, C., & Kitzinger, J. (2014). 'This in-between': How families talk about death in relation to severe brain injury and disorders of consciousness. In N. Carpentier & L. Van Brussel (Eds.), *The social construction of death: Interdisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 239-258). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kübler-Ross, E. (1969). *On death and dying*. Macmillan.
- Mason, J. (2015). Death and its concept. Retrieved from <https://www.philosophersmag.com/opinion/17-death-and-its-concept>
- Mora-Ortiz, M., Trichard, M., Oregioni, A., & Claus, S. P. (2019). Thanatometabolomics: introducing NMR-based metabolomics to identify metabolic biomarkers of the time of death. *Metabolomics, 15*(3), 1-11.
- Miller, A. C., Ziad-Miller, A., & Elamin, E. M. (2014). Brain death and Islam: the interface of religion, culture, history, law, and modern medicine. *Chest, 146*(4), 1092-1101.
- Mizuno, T., & Slingsby, B. T. (2007). Eye on religion: considering the influence of Buddhist and Shinto thought on contemporary Japanese bioethics. *Southern medical journal, 100*(1), 115-118.
- Nagy, M. (1948). The child's theories concerning death. *Journal of Genetic Psychology, 73*, 3-27.
- Nguyen, S. P., & Gelman, S. A. (2002). Four and 6-year olds' biological concept of death: The case of plants. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 20*(4), 495-513.
- Nguyen, S., & Rosengren, K. (2004). Parental reports of children's biological knowledge and misconceptions. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 28*(5), 411-420.
- Pelegriño, E. D. (2008). Controversies in the determination of death: A white paper by the President's Council on Bioethics. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10822/559343>
- President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research. (1981). *Defining death: Medical, legal and ethical issues in the determination of death*, Government Printing Office.
- Rady, M. Y. (2019). Objections to brain death determination: Religion and neuroscience. *Neurocritical Care, 31*(2), 446-448.
- Rittel, H. W., & Webber, M. (1973). Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. *Policy Sciences, 4*(2), 155-169.
- Sarbey, B. (2016). Definitions of death: Brain death and what matters in a person, *Journal of Law and the Biosciences, 3*(3), 743-752.
- Shewmon, D. A. (1998). Chronic "brain death": Meta-analysis and conceptual consequences. *Neurology, 51*, 1538-1545.
- Shewmon, D. A. (2001). The brain and somatic integration: Insights into the standard biological rationale for equating brain death with death. *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy, 26*(5), 457-478.
- Slaughter, V. (2005). Young children's understanding of death. *Australian Psychologist, 40*(3), 179-186.
- Speece, M. W. (1995). Children's concepts of death. *Michigan Family Review, 1*(1).
- Stan, O. M. (2016). Cryonics suspension—debating life finitude, extending time capital and canceling death. *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology, 7*(2), 71-91.

- Tamm, M., & Granqvist, A. (1995). The meaning of death for children and adolescents: A phenomenographic study of drawings. *Death Studies, 19*(3), 203-222.
- World Health Organization & Canadian Blood Services (WHO & CBS). (2012). Determination of Death – Phase I, Montreal Forum Report. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/patientsafety/montreal-forum-report.pdf>
- Vail, K. E., Rothschild, Z. K., Weise, D. R., Solomon, S., Pyszczynski, T., & Greenberg, J. L. (2010). A terror management analysis of the psychological functions of religion. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 14*(1), 84–94.
- Veatch, R. M. (2018). Would a reasonable person now accept the 1968 Harvard brain death report? A short history of brain death. *Hastings Center Report, 48*(54), S6-S9.
- Vrselja, Z., Daniele, S.G., Silbereis, J., Talpo, F., Morozov, Y. M., Sousa, A. M. M., . . . Sestan, N. (2019). Restoration of brain circulation and cellular functions hours post-mortem. *Nature, 568*, 336–343.

Filmography

- Code Geass: Lelouch of the Rebellion*. (2006-07). Animated series. Japan: Gorō Taniguchi
- Code Geass: Lelouch of the Rebellion R2*. (2008). Animated series. Japan: Gorō Taniguchi

The Effects of Religiosity on the Coping Ability of Post-Combat Troops

Madeleine Mallia
Baylor University

Abstract: There is a current gap in literature regarding individual religiosity in the military. Research in this area has the potential to help reduce the suicide rate among veterans and provide a more efficient approach to treatment. This preliminary study looks at levels of religiosity before and after combat and how this may affect coping practices in service members. This pilot project consists of 10 participants who are all male and served in the Vietnam Era. The Duke University Religion Index (DUREL) was utilized to measure religiosity levels before and after combat. The Brief Religious Coping Survey (RCOPE) identified positive and negative religious coping practices after combat. Once the survey was completed, an interview was conducted to provide more elaboration on the participants' answers. Implications for the study are very limited at the time but may provide insight into the beginning of a trend.

Introduction

Ron E. Hassner and Amy Burdette claim that while there has been much research on chaplains in the military, there is not much literature on religion in the military at the institutional, unit, or individual level.¹ In 2016, Hassner specifically calls for more attention on how individual religiosity is impacted by combat and the effects of religious habits on troops' mental health. Most studies were published in 2018, further emphasizing this gap in literature until recent efforts.

There is a consensus among scholars that struggles with religious faith likely contribute to risk for suicidal behavior in military populations. The most recent research by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs in 2017 indicates that there are twenty-two veterans a day who commit suicide and that veterans are 22% more at risk to commit suicide than civilian adults.² This statistic may be lower than the actual number because the study was not conducted in states with larger veteran populations. Joseph Currier et. al looked into further detail of which religious struggles specifically predicted risk for suicide. The results indicate the measures of spiritual struggles and ultimate meaning are especially predictive of troops'

¹ Amy M. Burdette et al., "Serving God and Country? Religious Involvement and Military Service among Young Adult Men," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, no. 4 (2009): 794–804; Ron E. Hassner, "Hypotheses on Religion in the Military," *International Studies Review* 18, no. 2 (2016): 312–332.

² "Suicide Among Veterans and Other Americans 2001-2014" (n.d.): 48; Rachel Kimerling et al., "Military Sexual Trauma and Suicide Mortality," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 50, no. 6 (June 1, 2016): 684–691.

“perceived likelihood” of attempting suicide.³ Hassner has also found that more religiosity in an individual before combat results in better coping afterwards, and vice versa.⁴ Similar to these studies, my research will hopefully provide more specific insight as to what kind of thoughts occur after combat and what has helped others cope. With the current veteran suicide rate in the United States, researchers must learn as much as possible about factors that can help prevent this issue.

Struggles with mental health at an individual level have an effect on family and society as well. Many organizations, such as the Chris Kyle Frog Foundation, not only focus on the service member but the family unit as well. Programs assist families with how to support their loved one and how to repair relationships if they have been strained. The integration of religion has especially been demonstrated to foster a healthy family dynamic. Meta-studies have shown that higher levels of religiosity generally have a positive influence on marriage and health, which result in happier marriages and lower divorce rates.⁵ One study further highlights the importance of family support, as it indicates a strong predictor of coping while in combat.⁶ Breakdown of the family due to unhealthy coping mechanisms can lead to criminal activity. Recently, Veterans’ Courts have been created to help rehabilitate veterans with mental health challenges resulting from their service. Many rehabilitation programs, including those available to Veterans’ Court, have faith integrated into their practice. This is because higher levels of religiosity have been shown to positively impact the lives of ex-convicts, resulting in lower recidivism rates.⁷ While the aforementioned programs are doing wonderful work, it would be ideal if mental health could be addressed before these problems begin. Religiosity plays a huge and effective role in prevention. This study will provide further insight as to how or if religiosity can be used as a preventative measure.

Furthermore, there is a desire among veterans to have faith integrated into their treatment. One study consisting of veterans with PTSD related to military service found that 85% of participants expressed willingness to partake in spiritually-oriented therapy (SOT), and 41% responded that they would definitely attend SOT.⁸ Furthermore, among other factors, those with more severe PTSD and greater religiosity scores were correlates of being definitely willing to participate in SOT.⁹

³ Joseph M. Currier et al., “Exploring Cross-Lagged Associations between Spiritual Struggles and Risk for Suicidal Behavior in a Community Sample of Military Veterans,” *Journal of Affective Disorders* 230, no. Journal Article (2018): 93–100.

⁴ Hassner, “Hypotheses on Religion in the Military,” *International Studies Review* 18, no. 2 (March 5, 2016): 312-332.

⁵ S. Feldhahn, T. Whitehead, and A. Stanley, *The Good News About Marriage: Debunking Discouraging Myths about Marriage and Divorce* (Crown Publishing Group, 2014), <https://books.google.com/books?id=dw7HAgAAQBAJ>.

⁶ “The Influence of Spirituality and Religion on Coping for Combat-Deployed Military Personnel - Sterner - 2015 - Counseling and Values - Wiley Online Library,” accessed February 17, 2020, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/j.2161-007X.2015.00060.x>.

⁷ B. Johnson, *More God, Less Crime: Why Faith Matters and How It Could Matter More* (Templeton Press, 2012), <https://books.google.com/books?id=E919pwAACAAJ>.

⁸ Nagy A. Youssef et al., “Interest among Veterans in Spiritually-Oriented Therapy for Inner Conflict/Moral Injury in the Setting of PTSD,” *Annals of Clinical Psychiatry* 30, no. 4 (2018): 262–270.

⁹ Ibid.

Another study had 67% of its participants with significant PTSD express interest in SOT for their moral injury.¹⁰ One of the researchers from this study also found that, with veterans suffering from severe PTSD, religiosity is inversely related to moral injury.¹¹ A form of group therapy called Building Spiritual Strength (BSS) was created based on research regarding the positive relationship between spirituality and adjustment to trauma. It is an eight session, spiritually integrated approach that addresses religious strain and improvement upon “religious meaning making for military trauma survivors.”¹² One study randomly assigned participants to the BSS group and a wait-list control group. The group that participated in BSS showed statistically significant reductions in PTSD symptoms compared to those in the wait-list control group. This further indicates the positive effect religion can have on mental health and healing. Additionally, a study by Kate Thomas found that prayer and religiosity decrease cortisol levels and increase cognitive ability.¹³ However, each author calls for more research on religion-based approaches for trauma survivors.

Studies have also delved into positive and negative religious coping. Positive religious coping involves mechanisms such as “benevolent religious reappraisal, religious forgiveness, or purification and seeking religious support.”¹⁴ Negative religious coping involves “a reappraisal of God’s powers, spiritual discontent, or a belief in a punishing deity.”¹⁵ In Hassner’s study, soldiers who experienced a higher existential well-being before combat were less likely to develop depressive symptoms after deployment. Those who exercised negative religious coping mechanisms before combat were more likely to experience PTSD symptoms. In similar studies, more severe PTSD, depression, and anxiety were developed in those who exercised negative religious coping. Scholars suggest that patients recovering from shock who rely on religion enjoy better social relationships, fewer unpleasant thoughts, fewer temper outbursts, and a more positive outlook on life. One study measured positive and negative religious coping after combat rather than prior to, like Hassner’s study. It indicated that those who utilized positive religious coping were more strongly related to posttraumatic growth (PTG) and those with negative religious coping mechanisms were more strongly related to PTSD.¹⁶ This study also observed that positive religious coping partly mediated the relationship

¹⁰ Harold G. Koenig et al., “Moral Injury and Religiosity in US Veterans With Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms,” *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 206, no. 5 (2018): 325–331.

¹¹ Harold G. Koenig et al., “Dimensions of Religiosity and PTSD Symptom Clusters in US Veterans and Active Duty Military,” *Journal of religion and health* 58, no. 3 (2019): 805–822.

¹² “The Effectiveness of a Trauma Focused Spiritually Integrated Intervention for Veterans Exposed to Trauma - Harris - 2011 - Journal of Clinical Psychology - Wiley Online Library,” accessed February 17, 2020, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/jclp.20777>.

¹³ Kate Hendricks Thomas, “Warrior Faith: A Marine’s Lesson in Religion, Health, and Healing,” *Social Work and Christianity* 43, no. 3 (2016): 109.

¹⁴ Hassner, “Hypotheses on Religion in the Military,” *International Studies Review* 18, no. 2 (March 5, 2016): 312-332.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Monica M. Gerber, Adriel Boals, and Darnell Schuettler, “The Unique Contributions of Positive and Negative Religious Coping to Posttraumatic Growth and PTSD,” *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 3, no. 4 (November 2011): 298–307.

between gender and PTG. This could be because religious institutions indirectly provide group support and are the reason chaplains were integrated into the military.

As mentioned above, religiosity has a great impact on mental health and coping after combat. Studies have demonstrated that healing can occur through positive religious coping mechanisms. While these findings are helpful, there is still much to be learned about individual religiosity in combat-experienced troops and how it affects their coping mechanisms.

Methods

In this preliminary assessment for the study, there are only 10 participants represented. All participants are male thus far with an age range of 49 to 82 years old. For ethnicity, 9 identify as Caucasian and 1 as Hispanic. Every participant identifies as Christian with various denominations represented.

The questionnaires used were the Duke University Religion Index (DUREL) and the Brief Religious Coping survey (RCOPE). The DUREL consists of 5 questions and 3 subscales. The three dimensions are organized religious activity, non-organizational religious activity, and intrinsic religiosity. The first two dimensions have a 6-point response scale regarding frequency of involvement that ranges from 1 (never) to 6 (more than once a day or week). The third dimension for intrinsic religiosity is a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (definitely not true) to 5 (definitely true of me). An item included is "How often did you spend time in private religious activities, such as prayer, meditation, or Bible study?"¹⁷ The overall scale has a test-retest reliability of 0.91, and high internal validity with Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0.78-0.91.¹⁸ This proves it to be a fit choice for this study. Participants completed the DUREL once for their perception of their beliefs before service and then another time for their current views. The Brief RCOPE consists of 14 items that measure two types of religious coping, positive and negative, with major life stressors. In this case, it was based on how participants have coped with issues that stem from combat. There are 7 items in each dimension with a 4-point response scale that ranges from 1 (not at all) to 4 (a great deal). Kenneth Pargament and his research colleagues claim that empirical studies support the construct validity, predictive validity, and incremental validity of the Brief RCOPE.¹⁹ An interview also followed the survey. It serves as an elaboration of the questions on the survey and allows the participants to tell their stories. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed on the website Otter. Otter also acted as a method of tracking certain phrases and themes in the interviews.

The survey was created around the question "do changes in religiosity after combat (if they occur) affect forms of coping?" The surveys were originally created on paper copies, but were later transferred to the website Qualtrics for better privacy

¹⁷ Harold G. Koenig and Arndt Büssing, "The Duke University Religion Index (DUREL): A Five-Item Measure for Use in Epidemiological Studies," *Religions* 1, no. 1 (December 2010): 78–85.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Kenneth Pargament, Margaret Feuille, and Donna Burdzy, "The Brief RCOPE: Current Psychometric Status of a Short Measure of Religious Coping," *Religions* 2, no. 1 (2011).

and analysis. The first page includes a consent form where participants note their names, signatures, and dates that the document was signed. The second page clarifies sex, age, ethnicity, years of service, military branch, and status of relation to the military (active duty, retired, discharged, etc.) The next portion of the questionnaire consists of the DUREL for pre-combat beliefs, another DUREL for post-combat beliefs, and the Brief RCOPE. Finally, the survey ends with a debriefing and contact information for participants if they have any concerns. The flyer for the study was emailed to various churches and veteran organizations in Texas. Completing the survey did not take more than 5-10 minutes and the interview time varied depending on how much the participant wanted to discuss.

Findings

Because this is a pilot study, there are not enough participants to produce statistical significance. However, there are a few patterns worth discussing so far. The demographic of participants is very similar with 9 out of 10 being Caucasian, all male, and all from the Vietnam era. Future participants will be more diverse, but the similarities can be considered an advantage for this preliminary study. The first dimension of the DUREL is the frequency of attendance at religious services, or 'public' religiosity. Before combat, each participant had high levels of public religiosity (within the 5-6 range). After combat, half remained the same level, 3 had a slight decrease, and 1 had a slight increase. In their interviews, those whose public activity decreased discussed how their lives got busy and that is why there was a slight decrease. It did not seem to be related to combat experiences. The DUREL's second dimension is the frequency of private religious activities. This had a more varied response among participants before combat than afterwards when all but one participant showing high levels (within the 5-6 range). After combat, 3 remained the same level, 5 increased, and 2 slightly decreased (with one going from 6 to 5). The internal religiosity levels either remain the same or increase post-combat. One average slightly decreased by .33, which is not very significant. Most participants had average to high levels pre-combat, which then turned into all having high levels post-combat. With 9 of the participants, high levels of positive religious coping mostly correlated with low levels of negative religious coping. Participant 6 had low levels of both positive and negative coping due to not feeling as though he needed to cope for much. Overall, the mean for positive coping is 2.86 and negative coping is 1.51.

Figure 1: DUREL- Public Religiosity

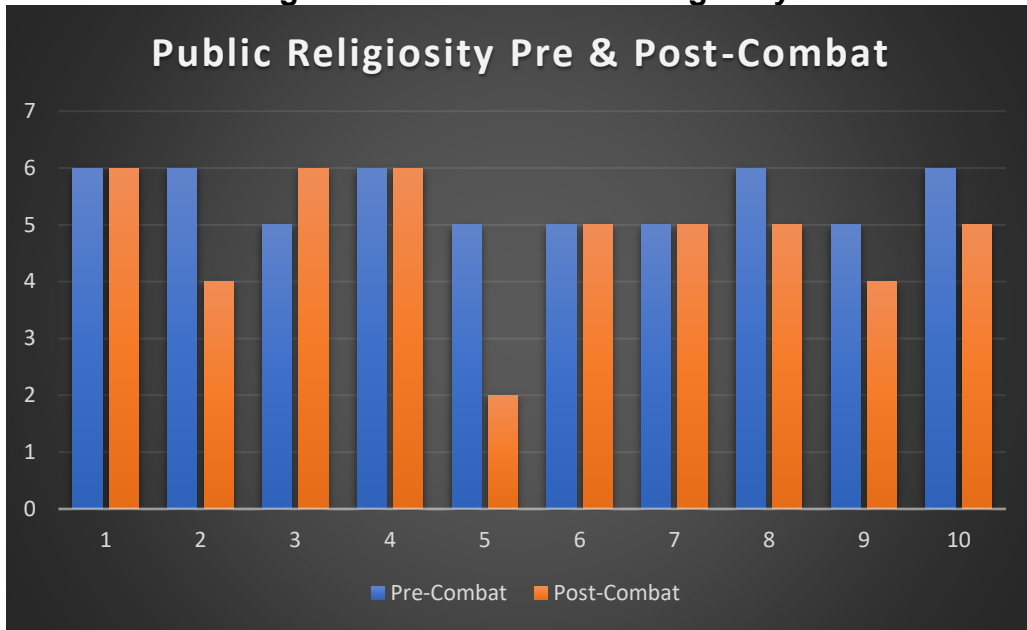


Figure 2: DUREL- Private Religiosity

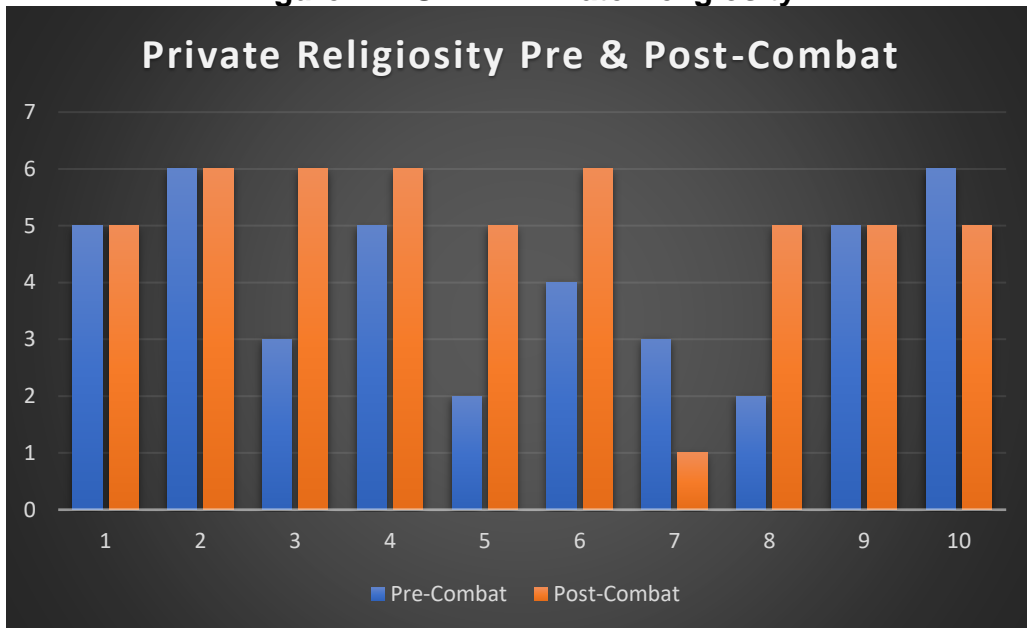


Figure 3: DUREL Internal Religiosity

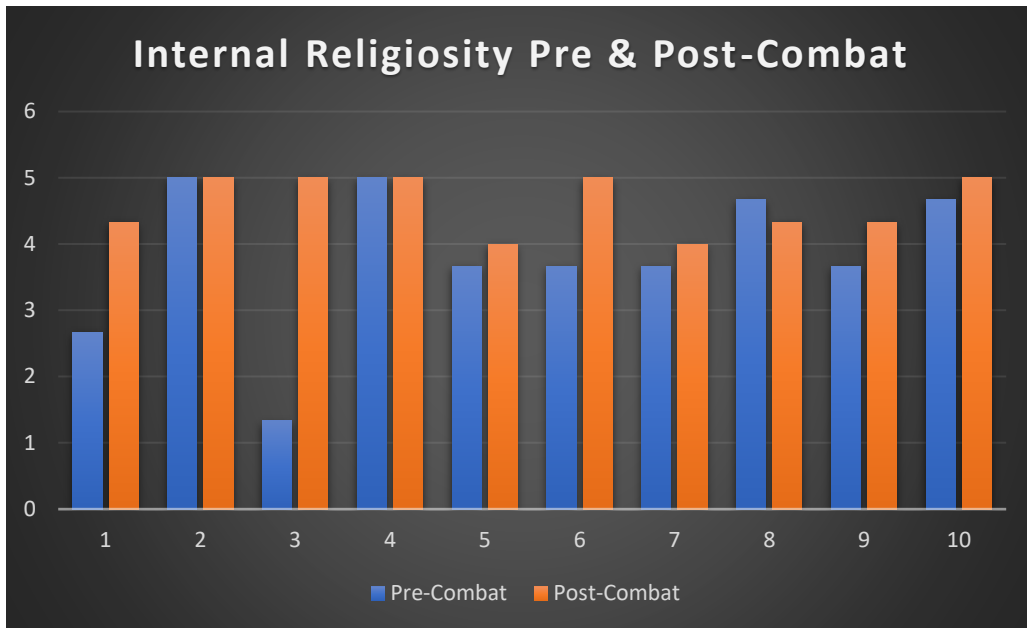
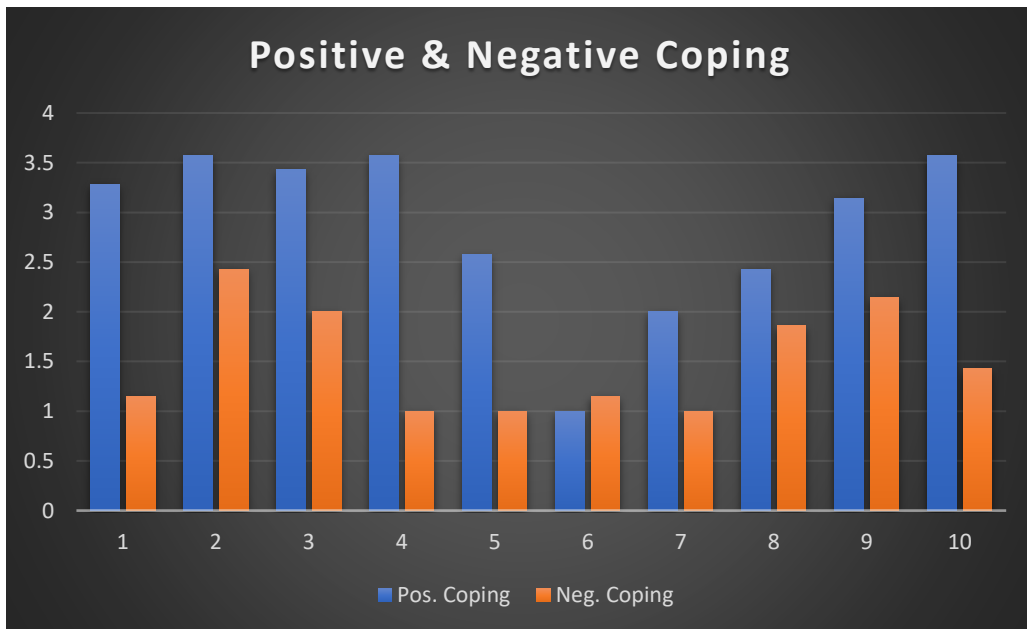


Figure 4: Brief RCOPE: Positive & Negative Religious Coping



Discussion and Conclusions

As mentioned earlier, the pilot study may present the beginning of an indication as to the relationship between religiosity levels and coping after combat, but it cannot produce statistical significance yet. The initial results seem to support

the literature that advocates for religion's impactful role in recovery. Those with high levels of religiosity either kept the same level of faith or strengthened it throughout time. This could be due to the relatively high levels of positive religious coping versus lower levels of negative religious coping. The implications of the preliminary study can only extend to an emerging pattern within Vietnam era veterans who are Christian and have relatively high levels of religiosity prior to combat. The goal in the future is to recruit a diverse pool of participants. This could include diversity in age, race, military branch, religion, and geographic region. The participants have also mainly been recruited through religious institutions. Therefore, those attracted to participate in the study currently have high levels of religiosity; 4 of the participants fulfill pastor-like roles. It will be interesting to see the relation of coping styles with service members who have lower levels of religiosity.

Despite being part of the Vietnam Era, every participant volunteered to serve in the military. This affects their outlook compared to those who were drafted. One main theme throughout the interviews is the belief that they did what they had to do to serve their country and do not regret that part. Most participants do mention a particular moment that haunts them whether it be about friends dying or moments where the opposition became very humanized. They are trained to dehumanize the enemy as much as possible to get the job done, but that does not stop them from being human themselves. Many veterans talk about a certain person that they had to kill or perhaps accidentally killed, who made them stop and think about who that person was and who may have been missing them. Although these instances are intense, the veterans mainly focused on other topics. This may be a practice of positive coping; if they were to dwell on a past they cannot change, they would be miserable all the time.

A couple participants mentioned a faith crisis and severe mental health challenges directly after their service. They turned to substance abuse in an attempt to cope with their pain and eventually became homeless because of it. One participant went back into service because he did not know what else to do, and the other sporadically went through treatment until he participated in Veterans' Treatment Court. It was there that he got the resources he really needed and permanently became sober. Both participants mention how faith was an integral part to their recovery. They attribute this healing to community, stability, purpose, and God. Once reunited with their faith, they dove into their religious practices.

Although it is simply the beginning of this study, it has a high level of importance. Anything that can be found with such a wide gap in literature is helpful. The data and specific insights from interviews could potentially contribute to others' quality of life and life itself. Even giving veterans a voice through the study and reminding them that the public cares is very impactful. I am looking forward to meeting more incredible people and learning more through this research. Hopefully my thesis can turn into a more large-scale study in graduate school. It would be very beneficial to receive feedback on how this project can be improved or to hear any questions about the study. The military community deserves the best that can be offered

Biographical Note

Madeleine Mallia is a senior at Baylor University. She is in the University Scholar program within Baylor's Honors College and has concentrations in psychology and religion. After graduation, she plans to attend graduate school for faith-integrated clinical psychology. Address emails to: madeleine_mallia@baylor.edu

References

- Burdette, Amy M., Victor Wang, Glen H. Elder, Terrence D. Hill, and Janel Benson. "Serving God and Country? Religious Involvement and Military Service among Young Adult Men." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, no. 4 (2009): 794–804.
- Currier, Joseph M., Ryon C. McDermott, Wesley H. McCormick, Marc C. Churchwell, and Lori Milkeris. "Exploring Cross-Lagged Associations between Spiritual Struggles and Risk for Suicidal Behavior in a Community Sample of Military Veterans." *Journal of Affective Disorders* 230, no. Journal Article (2018): 93–100.
- Feldhahn, S., T. Whitehead, and A. Stanley. *The Good News About Marriage: Debunking Discouraging Myths about Marriage and Divorce*. Crown Publishing Group, 2014. <https://books.google.com/books?id=dw7HAgAAQBAJ>.
- Gerber, Monica M., Adriel Boals, and Darnell Schuettler. "The Unique Contributions of Positive and Negative Religious Coping to Posttraumatic Growth and PTSD." *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 3, no. 4 (November 2011): 298–307.
- Hassner, Ron E. "Hypotheses on Religion in the Military." *International Studies Review* 18, no. 2 (2016): 312–332.
- Johnson, B. *More God, Less Crime: Why Faith Matters and How It Could Matter More*. Templeton Press, 2012. <https://books.google.com/books?id=E919pwAACAAJ>.
- Kimerling, Rachel, Kerry Makin-Byrd, Samantha Louzon, Rosalinda V. Ignacio, and John F. McCarthy. "Military Sexual Trauma and Suicide Mortality." *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 50, no. 6 (June 1, 2016): 684–691.
- Koenig, Harold G., and Arndt Büssing. "The Duke University Religion Index (DUREL): A Five-Item Measure for Use in Epidemiological Studies." *Religions* 1, no. 1 (December 2010): 78–85.
- Koenig, Harold G., Nagy A. Youssef, Donna Ames, John P. Oliver, Ellen J. Teng, Kerry Haynes, Zachary D. Erickson, et al. "Moral Injury and Religiosity in US Veterans With Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms." *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 206, no. 5 (2018): 325–331.
- Koenig, Harold G., Nagy A. Youssef, Donna Ames, Rev John P. Oliver, Fred Volk, Ellen J. Teng, and Terrence D. Hill. "Dimensions of Religiosity and PTSD Symptom Clusters in US Veterans and Active Duty Military." *Journal of religion and health* 58, no. 3 (2019): 805–822.
- Pargament, Kenneth, Margaret Feuille, and Donna Burdzy. "The Brief RCOPE: Current Psychometric Status of a Short Measure of Religious Coping." *Religions* 2, no. 1 (2011).
- Thomas, Kate Hendricks. "Warrior Faith: A Marine's Lesson in Religion, Health, and Healing." *Social Work and Christianity* 43, no. 3 (2016): 109.

Youssef, Nagy A., Elizabeth Lee, Donna Ames, John R. Oliver, Ellen J. Teng, Kerry Haynes, Fred Volk, and Harold G. Koenig. "Interest among Veterans in Spiritually-Oriented Therapy for Inner Conflict/Moral Injury in the Setting of PTSD." *Annals of Clinical Psychiatry* 30, no. 4 (2018): 262–270.

"Suicide Among Veterans and Other Americans 2001-2014" (n.d.): 48.

"The Effectiveness of a Trauma Focused Spiritually Integrated Intervention for Veterans Exposed to Trauma - Harris - 2011 - Journal of Clinical Psychology - Wiley Online Library." Accessed February 17, 2020. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/jclp.20777>.

"The Influence of Spirituality and Religion on Coping for Combat-Deployed Military Personnel - Sterner - 2015 - Counseling and Values - Wiley Online Library." Accessed February 17, 2020. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/j.2161-007X.2015.00060.x>.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Duke University Religion Index (DUREL)

When in high school/prior to service:

(1) How often did you attend church or other religious meetings?

- 1 – Never
- 2 - Once a year or less
- 3 - A few times a year
- 4 - A few times a month
- 5 - Once a week
- 6 - More than once/week

(2) How often did you spend time in private religious activities, such as prayer, meditation or Bible study?

- 1 - Rarely or never
- 2 - A few times a month
- 3 - Once a week
- 4 - Two or more times/week
- 5 – Daily
- 6 - More than once a day

The following section contains 3 statements about religious belief or experience. Please mark the extent to which each statement is true or not true for you.

(3) Prior to combat, I experienced the presence of the Divine (i.e., God)

- 1 - Definitely not true
- 2 - Tends not to be true
- 3 – Unsure
- 4 - Tends to be true
- 5 - Definitely true of me

(4) My religious beliefs were what really lied behind my whole approach to life

- 1 - Definitely not true
- 2 - Tends not to be true
- 3 – Unsure
- 4 - Tends to be true
- 5 - Definitely true of me

(5) I tried hard to carry my religion over into all other dealings in life

- 1 - Definitely not true
- 2 - Tends not to be true
- 3 – Unsure
- 4 - Tends to be true
- 5 - Definitely true of me

Currently:

(1) How often do you attend church or other religious meetings?

- 1 – Never
- 2 - Once a year or less
- 3 - A few times a year
- 4 - A few times a month
- 5 - Once a week
- 6 - More than once/week

(2) How often do you spend time in private religious activities, such as prayer, meditation or Bible study?

- 1 - Rarely or never
- 2 - A few times a month
- 3 - Once a week
- 4 - Two or more times/week
- 5 – Daily
- 6 - More than once a day

The following section contains 3 statements about religious belief or experience. Please mark the extent to which each statement is true or not true for you.

(3) In my life, I experience the presence of the Divine (i.e., God)

- 1 - Definitely not true
- 2 - Tends not to be true
- 3 – Unsure
- 4 - Tends to be true
- 5 - Definitely true of me

(4) My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life

- 1 - Definitely not true
- 2 - Tends not to be true
- 3 – Unsure

- 4 - Tends to be true
- 5 - Definitely true of me

(5) I try hard to carry my religion over into all other dealings in life

- 1 - Definitely not true
- 2 - Tends not to be true
- 3 - Unsure
- 4 - Tends to be true
- 5 - Definitely true of me

APPENDIX B: The Brief Religious Coping Survey (RCOPE)

The following items deal with ways you coped with life after combat. There are many ways to cope with problems. These items ask what you did to cope with life after combat. Obviously different people deal with things in different ways, but we are interested in how you tried to deal with it. Each item says something about a particular way of coping. We want to know to what extent you did what the item says. How much or how frequently. Don't answer on the basis of what worked or not - just whether or not you did it. Use these raceway choices. Try to rate each item separately in your mind from the others. Make your answers as true FOR YOU as you can.

RESPONSE OPTIONS: 1 = Not at all; 2 = Somewhat; 3 = Quite a bit; 4 = A great deal

1. Tried to see how God might be trying to strengthen me in this situation.
2. Wondered what I did for God to punish me.
3. Felt punished by God for my lack of devotion.
4. Decided the devil made this happen.
5. Questioned the power of God.
6. Tried to put my plans into action together with God.
7. Sought God's love and care.
8. Focused on religion to stop worrying about my problems.
9. Asked forgiveness for my sins.
10. Wondered whether God had abandoned me.
11. Looked for a stronger connection with God.
12. Questioned God's love for me.
13. Wondered whether my church had abandoned me.
14. Sought help from God in letting go of my anger.

The Brief RCOPE: Positive and Negative Coping Subscale Items

(Won't be included in actual questionnaire, but how it will be scored)

Positive Religious Coping Subscale Items

1. Tried to see how God might be trying to strengthen me in this situation.
2. Tried to put my plans into action together with God.
3. Sought God's love and care.
4. Focused on religion to stop worrying about my problems.

5. Asked forgiveness for my sins.
6. Looked for a stronger connection with God.
7. Sought help from God in letting go of my anger.

Negative Religious Coping Subscale Items

1. Wondered what I did for God to punish me.
2. Felt punished by God for my lack of devotion.
3. Decided the devil made this happen.
4. Questioned the power of God.
5. Wondered whether God had abandoned me.
6. Questioned God's love for me.
7. Wondered whether my church had abandoned me.

APPENDIX C: Interview Questions

1. Background questions (name, age, where they're from, years of service, location of service)
2. What is your religion, if any?
3. Did your family take you to church growing up? If so, what place of worship did they attend?
4. What kind of religious beliefs and practices did your parents have?
5. Is religion an important part of your life?
6. Can you describe your church attendance before and after combat experience?
7. Have you noticed any changes in church involvement before and after service?
8. Can you describe how frequently you prayed before and after service?
9. Do you remember what you prayed about before deployment and, now, after?
10. Has your view of God changed after service?
11. Is there a difference in turning to God to make decisions?
12. How would you describe your relationship with God before and after service?
13. Is there a reason or explanation as to why people suffer? How would you have answered that before service vs after?
14. If you have to cope with what occurred in combat, what methods do you use?
15. What thoughts do you typically have when coping?
16. Do you believe in life after death?