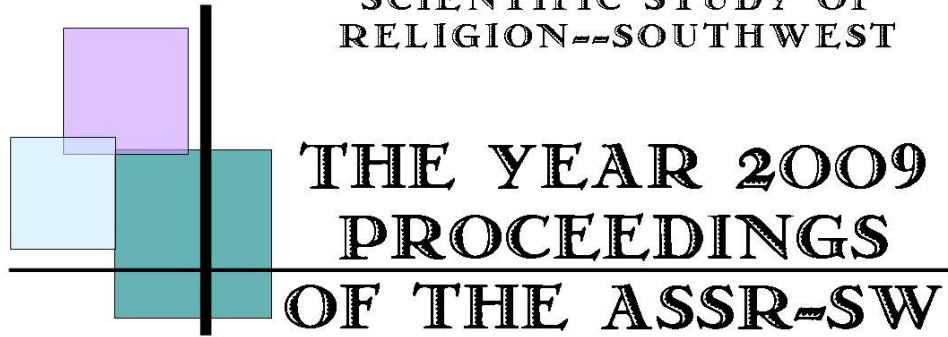


ASSOCIATION FOR THE
SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF
RELIGION--SOUTHWEST



**THE YEAR 2009
PROCEEDINGS
OF THE ASSR-SW**

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President and Editor's Note

Welcome once again to the *Proceedings* of Association for the Scientific Study of Religion--Southwest (ASSR-SW). It is again both an honor and privilege to serve as the editor for *The Year 2009 Proceedings of the ASSR-SW*. Year after year, the *Proceedings* are another fine collection of papers and presentations from both our perennial authors and presenters as well as a host of new academic talent who bring with them new styles and topics. Regardless of who contributes to this collection, the subject matter never tires or bores the reader. As usual, this year's papers are again both scholarly and exceptional.

The quality of these *Proceedings* attests not only to the fine work that has been accomplished by the efforts of many who participate and promote our meetings through research, writing, attending our sessions, and sponsorship through both donations and the purchase of this collection. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helps to make the ASSR-SW what it has been, what it is, and what it hopes to become. Joining the ASSR-SW is still free of charge and all we ask in return is your support and participation in our yearly sessions and helping to make them successful by writing and presenting papers, chairing sessions, purchasing a copy of the *Proceedings* and attending the presentations of others.

It is important for our future that every member of the ASSR-SW not only encourages new membership at every opportunity but solicits scholars throughout the colleges, universities, and organizations at which you reside to become involved in our group through chairing sessions, writing and submitting papers, or holding office. We have grown significantly over the past few years and would like to see our organization become as inclusive as possible.

The ASSR-SW launched a new annual award in 2008. *The Frank P. Forwood Award for Excellence in Presented Research* is a peer reviewed award process for professional papers meeting the organizations expectations for quality and the *Proceedings* publication deadline. We want to congratulate the 2008 (and first ever) recipient, J.B. Watson of Stephen F. Austin State University.

I would also like to take this opportunity also to acknowledge the officers of the ASSR for this past year. These are the people who, along with our presenters, truly made the Year 2009 meetings possible:

- President:** Jon K. Loessin, Wharton County Junior College
Vice-President, Programs and Publications: Richard Ambler, Southern Arkansas University, Magnolia
Vice-President, Membership: J. B. Watson, Jr., Stephen F. Austin State University
Secretary: Todd Jay Leonard (Hirosaki Gakuin University [Japan])
Treasurer: Jeter Basden, Baylor University
Program Chair: Richard Ambler, Southern Arkansas University, Magnolia
Proceedings Editor: Jon K. Loessin, Wharton County Junior College

I hope all of you have a good year and I will be looking forward to your participation in the ASSR in 2009-2010! Be sure to visit our Web Site at: www.assr-sw.org complete with online publications of papers from past meetings (see the **Archives** on the site). Hopefully you will share this site with colleagues and students alike. Thanks.

Sincerely,

Jon K. Loessin, ASSR President and ASSR Proceedings Editor

NOTES:

Evangelist Ham's Pietist Preparation: Reading and Revival in American Evangelicalism

Jerry Hopkins

East Texas Baptist University

Pietism is an important emphasis in Christianity. It has deep roots in both biblical convictions and historical expressions of the faith. The various manifestations of pietism are all associated in some way with renewal movements even before what is normally identified as its location and period of founding in seventeenth century Europe. As Mark Noll emphasizes it represents "a complex phenomenon" that drew from Medieval mysticism, early Reformation lay emphases and a broad opposition to the formalism and coldness of some orthodox expressions of Christianity. It was an effort to return to what its advocates perceived to be true New Testament Christianity in the early Christian church. Noll accurately identified the pietists with efforts to reform Protestantism to give it new life and enthusiasm similar to that in the early church.¹

Defining and explaining pietism as an evangelical movement is important, particularly as one sets the parameters and projections regarding one's research. Sometimes the movement is misunderstood and ill-defined. Jonathan Strom's article² in 2002 makes some valid and extremely important points regarding this movement that needs to be considered at the outset of our consideration of Mordecai F. Ham's pietistic emphasis and the consequences of his defining theological experience and exposition. Strom explains how pietism as a movement involves a broader explanation than just a narrow linkage to German Lutheranism. It is more recently defined as a renewal movement within evangelicalism. This was particularly true of American church history and theological studies in relation to the pietist emphasis of evangelicalism and to some extent even fundamentalism. In both instances it is the

¹ Mark A. Noll, "Pietism" in Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), pp. 855-58 (quote, p. 858).

² Jonathan Strom, "Problems and Promises of Pietism Research," *Church History*, Vol. 71 (September, 2002), pp. 536-554; See also, William G. McLoughlin, "Pietism and the American Character," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 17, Part 1 (Summer, 1965), pp. 163-186.

direct, immediate and transforming experience that is emphasized by both the evangelical and the fundamentalist.³

Clearly there is controversy over how and to whom pietism can be linked. My understanding of pietism identifies it as a movement clearly and closely linked with awakening theology and evangelical outreach and enthusiasm, including an intense effort at social reform in key areas of personal and social life. This certainly becomes clear when one considers the scope and basic theology of the movements in Germany and related areas in Europe. Strom notes these many differences and disagreements in his article. Pietism is a movement that cuts across theological and denominational boundaries, as well as geographical and national boundaries. It is a movement that is largely theological and experiential in essential matters associated with the direct and immediate experience of God and the spiritual realm.

Historian William G. McLoughlin, drawing on Ernst Troeltsch, has explained what he termed “a sharp distinction between the mystical or quietistic pietism of Continental Europe and the activistic, aggressive reform-minded temper of English Puritanism.”⁴ It would be the activistic pietism that engaged American evangelicals and later fundamentalists who worked tirelessly to transform individuals and communities for the better. It was precisely this “reform-minded temper” that evangelicals and fundamentalists embraced in the years ending the nineteenth century and opening the twentieth century.

Mordecai Fowler Ham is a good example of the theological merger that brought together the conservative pietists from the East and “the more radical pietists of the frontier” to combine their efforts to baptize “the unwashed masses...in the Blood of the Lamb...”⁵ As the nineteenth century progressed new and more alarming dangers would surface and make even more essential this merger of pietist influences

³ Stanley J. Grenz gives a definition and explanation as he discusses Baptists and Evangelicals and their theology and piety. Stanley J. Grenz, “Theology and Piety Among Baptists and Evangelicals,” in *Southern Baptists and American Evangelicals: The Conversation Continues*, edited by David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), pp. 149-162.

⁴ William G. McLoughlin, “Pietism and the American Character,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 17 (Summer, 1965), p. 164.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

and ideas. Indeed the era in which Ham began his ministry was a period dominated by pietistic and evangelical reforms and reformers—Prohibition, the Social Gospel, William Jennings Bryan, Progressivism, Theodore Roosevelt, Anti-Evolutionism, and that “most pietistic of all our Presidents,” Woodrow Wilson.⁶

An important characteristic of historic pietism always manifest intellectual elements—study, reading, learning and higher education. This was true of both European pietists, even as it was colonial American pietists.⁷ This pietism is not anti-intellectual or overly emotional, as some historians have criticized pietistic movements of being.⁸ Historians such as William McLoughlin and Edwin Gaustad have shown the studious force and spiritual inspiration of pietism for evangelicals and specifically Baptists such as Isaac Backus and Obadiah Holmes in the unfolding of America’s religious tradition. The pietist stream would carry on into the twentieth century and would shape the “experimental piety” that would define the American religious experience.⁹ It was in this tradition that Mordecai Fowler Ham, Jr., began his ministry in 1901.

Ham was the son and grandson of Baptist preachers. He grew up in the rural churches of south, central Kentucky, Allen County and Warren County. His piety was the product of the thoughtful and enthusiastic preaching of his father Tobias and his grandfather Mordecai Fowler Ham, Sr., both of whom pastored rural churches in addition to their farming. Ham’s childhood and youth were spent under the influence and preaching of his father and his grandfather. He witnessed their earnest study of

⁶ Ibid., p. 171.

⁷ James Tanis, “Reformed Pietism in Colonial America” in F. Ernest Stoeffler, *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), pp. 57-59.

⁸ See Mark Noll’s “Foreword” in *Southern Baptists and American Evangelicals: The Conversation Continues*, edited by David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), pp. xiii-xiv.

⁹ William G. McLoughlin, *Isaac Backus and the American Pietistic Tradition* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1967); Edwin S. Baustad, ed., *Baptist Piety: The Last Will and Testament of Obadiah Holmes* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), and Edwin S. Gaustad’s review of McLoughlin’s book *Isaac Backus and the American Pietistic Tradition* in *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 40 (December, 1967), pp. 624-626.

the Bible and their commitment to reading and studying to prepare to preach. The Hams were noted for their commitment to education and scholarship. When Ham learned of his grandfather's approaching death he returned home to Kentucky to visit with him. His grandfather's death was an important event in that Ham faced what he interpreted as God's call to preach and the passing of the mantle from Mordecai, Sr., to Mordecai, Jr. The death of Ham's grandfather triggered in him a sense of God's calling to Christian ministry. From the February 28, 1899 death of Mordecai Fowler Ham, Sr., to December 1900, Ham wrestled with the calling to Christian ministry and finally in the month of December of 1900 he turned from his business career in Chicago to begin his work as an evangelist. He gave his share of his picture business and an interest in a building in Chicago to his partner. He borrowed money from a bank in Bowling Green, Kentucky, to begin his ministry as an evangelist.¹⁰

Mordecai was the son of a farmer-preacher. Tobia Ham supported himself and his family farming and supplementing that income with whatever the churches he served provided him. He was reared in a frugal, egalitarian, strongly republican and ardently democratic society in rural Kentucky. There was a polished calm and satisfied faith that marked both his grandfather and father. There was a predilection that caused both father and grandfather to embrace a sense of the divine and an understanding of the spiritual. They were obviously and devotedly pious in their church-life and their work-life.

Ham can be linked to the heritage that came out of the First and Second Great Awakening in America.¹¹ His grandfather and father were directly affected by the Second Great Awakening and this enthusiastic movement shaped their ministries and messages to the end of their lives. Their influence and inspiration embraced Mordecai from the very beginning of his ministry. Mordecai, Sr.'s death in 1900 particularly touched the young Ham's life and calling to ministry. He saw himself as

¹⁰ Edward E. Ham, *50 Years on the Battle Front With Christ: A Biography of Mordecai F. Ham* (Louisville, Kentucky: The Old Kentucky Home Revivalist, 1950), pp. 17-23.

¹¹ The pietist emphasis of the eighteenth century Great Awakening is emphasized in Edwin Scott Gaustad's *Dissent in American Religion*, Revised Edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 10-13. This study by Gaustad was originally issued in 1973 and revised in 2006.

picking up the “mantle” of his grandfather and continuing the ministry as defined by his father Tobias. This mystical experience has pietist markings and is an example of his direct experience of the spiritual and of God. Ham assumed the mantle of his grandfather and became an evangelist.

Upon Ham’s acknowledgement of God’s call to Christian ministry, he began to prepare for his ministry. He made a list of twenty-seven published works that he would read to prepare himself to preach.¹² Each of these works contributed

¹² In his biography of relative Mordecai Fowler Ham, Jr., Edward E. Ham in Appendix D presented a list of the books Ham studied during this period of time in the order that he read them. Following is the list of books Ham read and studied in the order presented:

1. Smith, Sir William, *Old Testament History*, New York: Harper and Bros., 1869.
2. Smith, Sir William, *New Testament History*, New York: Harper and Bros., 1890.
3. Walker, J. B., *Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*, Cincinnati: Cranstron & Curtis, n.d.
4. Graves, J. R., *Old Landmarkism*, Memphis: Southern Baptist Publication Soc., 1880.
5. Graves, J. R., *Bible Doctrine of the Middle Life as Opposed to Swedenborgianism and Spiritism*, Memphis: Sou. Bapt. Pub. Soc., 1873.
6. Graves, J. R., *Exposition of Parables*.
7. Graves, J. R., *Seven Dispensations: Work of Christ in Redemption*, Memphis: Sou. Bapt. Pub. Soc., n.d.
8. Pendleton, J. M., *Church Manual*, Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Soc., 1867.
9. The New Testament and “Genesis” to “Psalms” of the Old Testament (The above books were read between January 1 and July 20, 1901.)
10. *Josephus, Flavius*, Transl. by Whiston, William, New York: David Huntington, 1815.
11. Life and Epistles of Saint Paul.
12. Carson, Alexander, *Baptism, Its Mode and Subjects*, Philadelphia, 1848.
13. Earle, A. B., *Bringing in the Sheaves*, Boston: J. H. Earle, 1869.
14. Jeter, J. B., *Campbellism Examined*, New York: Sheldon, Lamport & Blakeman, 1855.
15. *Methodist Discipline*.
16. Graves, J. R., *The Great Iron Wheel Examined*, Nashville: by William G. Brownlow for the author, 1856.
17. Orchard, G., *A Concise History of Foreign Baptists*, New York: Sheldon, Lamport & Co., n.d.

significantly to his thinking, his spiritual and intellectual growth. As he read and studied the books, he also read and studied the Bible. In 1901 he would spend the first eight months doing nothing but praying, reading, studying and writing to prepare for his ministry. As he read he wrote down his thoughts and ideas. These months of preparation contributed significantly to his piety and spirituality. He spoke of this experience later, saying, "I came to see the terrible shortcomings of Christendom and how far even my own brethren had wandered from the New Testament pattern."¹³

The focus of Ham's reading was the Bible. He read the Bible beginning with the New Testament and the books of Genesis through Psalms in the Old Testament from January through July in 1901. As he read these books he also read the books by Sir William Smith entitled *Old Testament History* and *New Testament History*. Smith, an English lexicographer and biblical scholar with extensive knowledge of Greek and Latin classics, became professor of Greek and Latin in New College, London. He authored and edited many widely used Greek and Latin classical studies and dictionaries. Smith's two biblical histories were highly valued and widely read and consulted. Ham's reading of these two classic studies provided him with a good scholarly foundation for his study of the Bible and background for his development of sermons and studies to be used in his ministry.¹⁴

18. Salin, L. H., *Experience and Church Relation of a Converted Jew*, Louisville: 1877.

19. Prideaux, Humphrey, *The Old and New Testament connected in the History of the Jews, Etcetera*, New York: Harper & Bros., 1836.

20. McClure, J. B., *The Mistakes of Ingersoll*, Chicago: Rhodes & McClure, 1879.

21. Carter, *Baptists and High Liberty*

22. Moody, J. B., *Cooperation of Churches*

23. Ashmore, Wm., *Foreign Missions, the Order of the Day*

24. Pendleton, J. M., *Condition of the Baptist Cause in Kentucky In 1837*.

25. Waller, J.C., *Second Coming of Christ*, Louisville: Waller, Sherrill & Co., 1865.

26. Moody, D. L., *Second Coming of Christ*

27. Ray, D. B., *Baptist Succession, A Handbook of Baptist History*, Cincinnati: George E. Stevens & Co., for the author, 1870.

¹³ Ham, *50 Years*, p. 24.

¹⁴ Elgin Moyer, revised and enlarged by Earle E. Cairns, *Wycliffe Biographical Dictionary of the Church* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1982), p. 374.

In addition to the general and introductory studies of the Old and New Testament, Ham consulted J. B. Walker's *Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation* to gain an understanding of the nature of biblical conversion and how a person comes to acquire salvation.¹⁵ Later he would read A. B. Earle's volume titled *Bringing in the Sheaves* on evangelism and how to present and commend salvation to people, individually and corporately.¹⁶ In both of these books Ham came to understand the nature of faith and good works in Christian pietism.

An important element in evangelical pietism is that "true faith produces good works." This element has clearly appeared again and again through the history of evangelical and fundamentalist theological traditions. Nineteenth century evangelicals influenced by the theology of the Second Great Awakening were moved by an experiential pietism that promoted evangelism and social morality.¹⁷ In this evangelists such as Moody, Sunday and Ham stressed the importance of doing good, not to be saved, but to prove one's salvation and piety.

Ham's stress on a converted ministry was one of the things that he shared with historic pietism in both America and Europe. Ham's strong words from early in his ministry regarding an unconverted clergy created unrest and hostility from some Christians, even as it had when others who embraced the enthusiasm of Christianity piety.¹⁸ From early in America's religious development pietism made dramatic contributions. It contributed important strands to "the fabric of American theology. Pietism had established a new pattern of evangelism and a new form of revivalism; it had opened unforeseen and uncontrived avenues of ecumenism; and it had created America's own odd mixture of personal piety, moralism, and national faith."¹⁹ Nineteenth century evangelicals were influenced by the theology of the Second Great Awakening, embracing an experiential pietism that promoted evangelism and social

¹⁵ J. B. Walker, *Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation* (Cincinnati: Cranstron & Curtis, n.d.).

¹⁶ A. B. Earle, *Bringing in the Sheaves* (Boston: J. H. Earle, 1869).

¹⁷ Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington & George A. Rawlyk, *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, The British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 74.

¹⁸ Tanis, p. 63.

¹⁹ Tanis, p. 72.

morality that was believed to impact the larger society significantly.²⁰ Such activist pietism prompted many evangelicals and fundamentalists to embrace reforms, particularly prohibition, as the logical result of a personal relationship with God.

Ham's enthusiasm for the prohibition movement during Progressive America marked his early ministry and must be considered as an essential part of his pietist persuasion.²¹ He believed that a Christian's personal faith would result in significant changes in one's personal life and consequently social life. Thus individual conversion was essential to transforming a society, making social morality a result of one's evangelism. Ham came to work with a broad group of evangelicals and fundamentalists, including at times Methodists, Presbyterians, Disciples and Independent, as well as Southern, Baptists.

The influence of Methodist ecclesiology and discipline was very important in Ham's ministry. He read the *Methodist Discipline* and absorbed the key elements in this ministry guidebook.²² This again marked the pietist influence in Ham's life, the trans-denominational nature of his evangelical faith; the emphasis on discipline, dedication, conversion and holiness. While Ham remained a Baptist, he accepted and appreciated cooperation with Methodists and Presbyterians in most of his meetings.

²⁰ Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington and George A. Rawlyk, *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 74.

²¹ Jerry B. Hopkins, "Saved and Dry: Kentucky Local Option and Evangelist Mordecai F. Ham, 1907-1910," *The Quarterly Review (SBC)* 41 (1980): 62-79; Jerry B. Hopkins, "Mordecai F. Ham: Prohibition and Sensational Evangelism in Kentucky, 1914-1915" (M.A. Thesis, Eastern Kentucky University, 1969); Jerry Hopkins, "Evangelism, Prohibition, and Reform: Mordecai F. Ham and Prohibition in Kentucky," *The Filson Club Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 67 (January 2004), pp. 68-85; Jerry Hopkins, "The Righteous Crusade: World War I in the Thinking of Two American Evangelists," *Border States, Journal of the Kentucky-Tennessee American Studies Association*, No. 3, 1981, pp. 27-37; Hopkins, "No Guarantee: Mordecai F. Ham, Evangelism and Prohibition Meetings in Texas, 1903-1919," *The East Texas Historical Journal*, Vol. XLIV, 2006, pp. 44-51;

²² *Methodist Discipline*, It isn't known exactly which of the *Disciplines* that Ham read. It is likely that he read one from around the end of the nineteenth century or about 1900 or 1901. He may have purchased a new discipline and read it.

This same approach to his ministry would influence his association with others such as Fundamentalist J. Frank Norris. Ham first came to know Norris through contacts during his ministry in Texas that began in 1903 in meetings in Hico, Garland and Richmond.²³

It was William McLoughlin's contention that pietism communicated a particular vision of a moral and civil society in the Constitution to be expressed as an open society. Indeed McLoughlin states, "The pietists who framed the Constitution organized this nation and its institutions as an open and not a closed society."²⁴ It was this very pietistic and evangelical dynamic that would drive Ham to combine with his evangelism an aggressive opposition to the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcohol in Prohibition. Such a vision was the driving force in the reform efforts of Ham and his colleagues during the early years of the twentieth century leading up to the inauguration of Prohibition. His pietism necessitated that people, especially Christian people, live up to what they professed. He insisted that they "get on the wagon" and join the opposition to liquor. This certainly was at the heart of all pietism—"true faith produces good works."²⁵

Southern evangelicalism was captivated by fellowship and association. Samuel S. Hill has argued that this was an important element in the southern religious experience. It marked southern pietism. Hill wrote, "Southern evangelicals knew the sweetness of fellowship with others, they established schools and colleges, they organized reform societies, they gave leadership in the public domain, and they agonized over slavery, slaves, and their own connections with both institution and people."²⁶ Ham reached out to other denominations and other races, seeking to bring them into the revival experience and a new enthusiasm for the things of God. This was a result of his personal piety, but also it was a result of the ethos in which Ham grew up and learned the faith. His father and grandfather and the other ministers in

²³ Ham, *50 Years*, p. 291.

²⁴ McLoughlin, Isaac Backus, p. 174.

²⁵ David A. Currie, "Cotton Mather's Bonifacius in Britain and America," in Noll, Bebbington and Rawlyk, *Evangelicalism*, p. 73.

²⁶ Samuel S. Hill, "Northern and Southern Varieties of American Evangelicalism in the Nineteenth Century," in Noll, Bebbington and Rawlyk, *Evangelicalism*, p. 278.

their fellowship in southern, rural, central Kentucky, had thrived in this activist pietism that dominated the church life in that region.²⁷

Conclusion

Ham's study in his first months of ministry in 1901 became foundational and transformative in his thinking. He filled his thoughts with biblical images, theological conservatism, evangelical insights. He sought to understand the different expressions of the Christian and Protestant faith. He sought to understand the Baptists by reading Pendleton's work on Baptist polity and J. R. Graves on Landmarkism, and he sought to learn about the Methodists by reading the *Discipline*. In a sense, he accepted the best and most useful from these different persuasions and integrated them into his ministry, as well as his preaching.

What Ham learned in the books he read in preparation for his ministry emphasized a personal, experiential, enthusiastic faith manifesting itself, not only in personal holiness and theological orthodoxy, but also in public commitments, open confessions, social changes and moral crusades. From the very beginning of his ministry Ham emphasized this assumption of personal and society piety that could be seen and experienced in the church and in the community. The success of Ham's meetings are evidence of his commitment to both a personal piety and a corporate piety showing itself in an active church life, a moral personal life, and an active opposition to sin, particularly the sin of drunkenness. Ham readily embraced the fellowship of pastors and churches committed to this activist pietism—the Baptists, the

²⁷ For background and information on the spiritual state of things at this time consult J. H. Spencer, *A History of Kentucky Baptists*, Vol. 1 & 2 (Cincinnati, Ohio: Baumes Pub. Co, 1885; reprint Church History Archives, White House TN,, 1984); Leo T. Crismon, *Baptists in Kentucky, 1776-1976: A Bicentennial Volume* (Louisville: Kentucky Baptist Convention, 1975); William Dudley Nowlin, *Kentucky Baptist History* (Louisville: Baptist History Concern, 1922); Circular Letter, Written by P. C. Scott, 1851, Burlington Baptist Church, as posted on The Baptist History homepage: http://www.geocities.com/baptist_documents/1851.cl.nbba.scott.pc.html; Frank Masters, *A History of Baptists in Kentucky* (Louisville: Kentucky Baptist Historical Society, 1953).

Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the Disciples (sometimes known as Christians). In many communities across the South Ham reached out to Black Christians who were committed in large numbers to the pietist principles of knowing, experiencing and expressing their faith in God in both dynamic worship and public witness.

Ham became a very important figure in the transitional period from the end of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century when evangelicalism would once again gain ascendancy and acclaim in the life and ministry of Evangelist Billy Graham who was converted under Ham's preaching in a 1934 meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina. Graham himself would be signally influenced by pietist theology and practice as he developed his ministry and presented his messages.²⁸

²⁸ See the following biographical studies of Evangelist Graham as confirmation of this point in regards to his ministry background: Lewis A. Drummond, *The Evangelist: The Worldwide Impact of Billy Graham* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2001); John Pollock, *Billy Graham: The Authorized Biography* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1966); William Martin, *A Prophet With Honor: The Billy Graham Story* (New York: William Morrow, 1991); Stanley High, *Billy Graham: The Personal Story of the Man, His Message, and His Mission* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956); Curtis Mitchell, *Billy Graham: Saint or Sinner?* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming Revell, 1979); Curtis Mitchell, *Billy Graham: The Making of a Crusader* (Philadelphia: Chilton Publishers, 1966); Charles Dullea, *A Catholic Looks at Billy Graham* (New York: Paulist Press, 1973); John Pollock, *Crusades: 20 Years with Billy Graham* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1969); Marshall Frady, *A Parable of American Righteousness* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979); John Pollock, *Billy Graham: Evangelist to the World* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979); David Lockard, *The Unheard Billy Graham* (Nashville: Word Books, 1992). There are a great many messages, books and other publications that confirm Graham's debt to the strong influence of pietism on his thinking and ministry. Included in this important list are these volumes—*Just As I am* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997); *The Holy Spirit* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1978); *How to Be Born Again* (Nashville, TN: Word Books, 1997); *Approaching Hoofbeats: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (Dallas: Word Books, 1983); *A Biblical Standard for Evangelists* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1984); *Hope for the Troubled Heart* (Nashville: Word Books, 1991); *Peace With God* (New York: Pocket Books, 1963); *Answers to Life's Questions* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1988); *The Secret of Happiness* (New York: Doubleday, 1955); *The Challenge: Sermons From Madison Square Garden* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1969); *Storm Warning* (Nashville: Word Books, 1992);

He would emphasize in his work the personal and professional expression of the evangelical faith and how this faith should be presented, promoted and projected. He acquired from Ham and others like him the view that the Christian faith should find productive and constructive expression in one's personal and social life. Graham embraced the theology of Moody, Sunday and Ham as he began his ministry in the late 1940s. He would continue in that tradition, making significant and signal changes in his own way as he reached out to Pentecostals, Neo-Pentecostals, and even Roman Catholics. Indeed Graham would ultimately seek a broader and more encompassing evangelicalism that would claim friendship and fellowship with a wide spectrum of Christian believers, including even Greek Orthodox believers. Of course, Graham's association would be in the tradition of Ham and the other evangelists before him, but much more inclusive and extensive.²⁹

World Aflame (New York: Doubleday, 1965); *Revival in Our Time* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1950).

²⁹ Biographies of Graham and biographies and scholarly articles pertaining to those who came before him are important in this regard. For biographical studies of and scholarly articles on Evangelist Graham you should consult William D. Apel, "The Lost World of Billy Graham," *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 20 (Spring, 1979), pp. 138-149; See William G. McLoughlin, Jr., *Billy Sunday Was His Real Name* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955); Lyle W. Dorsett, *Billy Sunday and the Redemption of Urban America* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1991); A. W. Williams, *Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody: The Greatest Evangelist of the 19th Century* (New York: Cosimo, 2007); James F. Findlay, Jr., *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist, 1837-1899* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969); James F. Findlay, Jr., "Dwight L. Moody, Evangelist of the Gilded Age: 1837-1899," *Church History*, Vol. 30 (June, 1961), p. 232; James Findlay, "Education and Church Controversy: The Later Career of Dwight L. Moody," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 39 (June, 1966), pp. 210-232; Bruce T. Evensen, "'It Is a Marvel to Many People': Dwight L. Moody, Mass Media, and the New England Revival of 1877," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 72 (June, 1999), pp. 251-274; Bruce J. Evenson, *God's Man for the Gilded Age: D. L. Moody and the Rise of Modern Mass Evangelism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Bruce C. Nelson, "Revival and Upheaval: Religion, Irreligion, and Chicago's Working Class in 1886," *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 25 (Winter, 1991), pp. 233-253; James Findlay, "Moody, 'Gapmen,' and the Gospel: The Early Days of Moody Bible Institute," *Church History*, Vol. 31

Biographical Note

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(September, 1962), pp. 322-335; Donald A. Wells, "D. L. Moody and His Schools: An Historical Analysis of An Educational Ministry," *Church History*, Vol. 42 (June 1973), pp. 272-273; Kathleen Minnix, *Laughter in the Amen Corner: The Life of Evangelist Sam Jones* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993); Margaret Bendroth, "Why Women Loved Billy Sunday: Urban Revivalism and Popular Entertainment in Early Twentieth-Century American Culture," *Religion and American Culture*, Vol. 14 (Summer, 2004), pp. 251-271; Chapman, Sam Jones, etc. There are several of these that should be inserted here that can give significant information and associations.

**“Purpose Driven - Tweak Your Life - Let Jesus Make You Rich”
Modern U.S. Evangelical Churches: Consumer Religion and
Declining Spiritual Capital**

J.B. Watson, Jr.

Stephen F. Austin State University

We have many commodities but little satisfaction, little sense of the sufficiency of anything. The scarcity of satisfaction makes of our many commodities an infinite series of commodities, ... invariably promising greater satisfaction than the older ones. In fact, the industrial economy's most marketed commodity is satisfaction ... which is repeatedly promised, bought, and paid for, is never delivered.

Wendell Berry (2002:37)

Introduction

This paper will focus specifically on the growing phenomena of consumer religion, especially its impact and manifestations among U.S. evangelical churches. Consumer religion in modern society has taken on some new and unique forms not yet fully identified and explored by scholars. First, it is important to examine a few examples of early attempts to link economic activity and religion. The analysis of the larger relationship between economic activity and religion has a long-standing tradition in the field of Sociology, most notably in the works of Marx and Weber (Shirkat and Ellison, 1999). More generally, McCleary (2008) argued that the first modern critical examination of the relationship between economics and religion was put forth by Adam Smith in his classic work, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776. In his analysis of the conditions leading up to the industrial revolution, Smith applied his laissez-faire philosophy to several aspects of religion. In particular, McCleary pointed out that Smith's fundamental contribution to the modern study of religion was that religious beliefs and activities should be framed as rational choices. Akin to commercial activity, "individuals respond to religious costs and benefits in a predictable, observable manner. People choose a religion and the degree to which they participate and believe (if at all)" (2008: 1).

Concerns about the linkage of economics and religion can also be noted within historical religious movements. The noted theologian and public intellectual John Wesley (1703–1791), who founded Methodism and the Holiness Movement, provided insightful commentary on the relationship between religion and economic development. Wesley, in a sermon in 1744 near the beginning of the British Industrial Revolution, stated, “Gain all you can, save all you can, give all you can” (Kent, 1997:117). In another noteworthy sermon in 1760 entitled, “The Use of Money,” Wesley further developed these three points, emphasizing a strong work ethic, self-reliance, and the provision of mutual aid, especially to the poor. Two years before his death at age 88, Wesley admonished his congregation for their comfortable lifestyle and urged them to give away their newfound wealth (acquired during the rise of industrialism). Wesley clearly understood the causal relationship between economic productivity and religious belief. He also understood that wealth accumulation had the potential to weaken religiosity both in terms of beliefs and participation. Wesleyan scholars have suggested that he clearly saw certain forms of economic growth as detrimental to certain religious beliefs and practices (Kent, 1997).

In the modern North American context, sociologists of religion have detailed the rise of consumer religion in American society in recent decades, as traditional religious practices and consumer capitalism become melded together. The growing influence of the church growth movement, church marketing, megachurches, the “therapeutic” gospel, and the “prosperity” gospel reflect the growing influence of consumerist ideology within modern evangelical churches. Historian Kathryn Lofton argues that modern spirituality (both inside and outside of the institutional church context) is increasingly a product of the “prescriptive compulsion of spiritual capitalism” (Lofton, 2006:599). In this paper, consumer religion will be examined in relationship to spiritual capital. According to the concept of spiritual capital, there are measurable effects of religious institutions on civil society. Specifically, the thesis of this paper is that the growth of consumer religion has contributed to declines in spiritual capital. There has been a reduction in the “value added” by evangelical religious institutions to civil society, as consumer religion has become predominant in modern evangelical churches.

One barometer of current attention to the topic of consumer religion are recent books on the topic. The apparent focus of these books, however, reflects differing interpretations of the concept of consumer religion, and the differing levels of concern about the impact of consumerism on modern religious practices. At one end of the continuum are books that seem to embrace consumerism as a tool for church growth. One example is *Branding Faith: Why Some Churches and Nonprofits Impact Culture and Others Don't* (Cooke, 2008). At the other end of the continuum are recently published books that provide an alternative to consumer religion, such as *The Divine Commodity: Discovering a Faith Beyond Consumer Christianity* (Jethani, 2009), proposing wholesale alternatives to consumer religion.

Consumer Religion as a Theoretical Concept

While there is increasing scholarly attention on consumer religion, two particular aspects of consumer religion have been neglected. First, consumer religion as a theoretical concept has not been fully explored. What is the definition of consumer religion and what are its major dimensions? How is it distinct from other forms of modern religion? To what extent are new religious movements related to the rise of consumer religion? Scholars of religion must carefully examine these questions and other aspects of consumer religion in order to advance the study of this growing phenomenon in contemporary religion in the North American context.

Secondly, the relationship of the growing phenomenon of consumer religion to the larger society needs to be more fully explored. Sociologist Phillip Hammond (1963), in his classic essay, "Religion and the Informing of Culture," argued that religious institutions might cease influencing contemporary culture by becoming either too distant or too adaptive to it.

Consumer Religion in Practice

Clearly, modern churches have adapted to consumer culture in a massive way. James Twitchell (2004), in his book, *Branded Nation: The Marketing of Megachurch, College Inc., and Museumworld*, asserted that brands are part of a larger social narrative associated with specific products and lifestyles. This social narrative is now infusing churches, museums and non-profit organizations. Twitchell argued that

consumerism paradoxically serves as a new source of social solidarity, as consumer products replace birth, patina, pews, coats of arms, house, and social rank and traditional religion as touchstones of social identity. Adults, adolescents, and even young children immediately recognize imputed status and identity exemplified by the Nike logo, or any other skillfully promoted commercial product in popular culture. Thorsten Veblen's concept of conspicuous consumption can now be practiced by the masses, not just the economic elite. Consumption, according to Twitchell, is now essential to the construction of self-identity; the symbolic value of the product exceeds its practical value in most cases. Twitchell (2004) reframes the notion of "you are what you buy" and suggests that consumerism is now strongly woven into the social fabric - it provides products purchased for their practical value, but also for the crucial security value they can provide in an increasingly secular age. Consumerism is the ultimate paradoxical intervention: individuals find a sense of self through material objects in response to perceived needs. Twitchell rejects the common distinction between "real" and "false" needs, promulgated by advertising. There are no "false" needs - all needs are legitimated by the act of "wanting." If individuals seek greater self-confidence through clothing brands or a particular model of automobile, the act of purchasing the product is deliberate act of building self-confidence (Twitchell, 2004).

Spiritual Capital

According to Shah and Shah, religious belief, religious practice, or spirituality "serves as a resource for anyone, whether poor or non-poor, it can be considered as a form of 'capital' similar to financial capital, human capital, and the widely used concept of social capital" (2009:1). Conceptually, spiritual capital specifically references religious resources such as religious beliefs, practices, networks, and communities. Individuals thus draw on spiritual capital to improve their individual and collective well-being, including their economic, social, cultural and civic well-being. Spiritual capital, then, is a unique form of social capital. Spiritual capital goes beyond the bonds, bridges, networks, and an association created by routine social interaction, and provides a framework to fully include social phenomena that are religiously generated (Shah and Shah, 2009). Spiritual capital reflects the values, ethics, beliefs and vision which faith communities and individuals bring to civil society. Fundamentally, the contributions of spiritual capital can serve to bring hope and the potential transformation of individuals

and communities, addressing injustice, community engagement, and encouraging believers to work for community transformation in their local communities (Hall, 2006).

Consumer Religion and its Impact on Spiritual Capital

While there is widespread awareness of the rapid social change that has enveloped Western societies over the past 30 years, there is much less agreement about what has caused the changes, and the extent to which they have been beneficial. One barometer of change in Western society is the level of social capital, a concept popularized by political scientist Robert Putnam, which results from high levels of civic investment at the local, regional, and national levels. Putnam's oft-cited work, *Bowling Alone* (2000), considered the full range of civic engagement: declining participation in institutional churches, lower participation levels in organized sports and recreation, political participation, and charitable causes/volunteerism. These declines resulted in diminished social capital. Putnam (200) also detailed a litany of factors responsible for civic disengagement - suburban sprawl, the growing influence of television and electronic media, changing work patterns, the growth of the two-earner family pattern, and generational changes.

At the same time, western societies have developed consumer cultures that encourage the private pursuit of material goods over the public pursuit of common goods (Lyon 2000). Smidt (2003) argued that growing consumerism is accelerating and deepening the long-term impact of secularization in western cultures by encouraging a privatized spirituality as an outcome, in contrast to traditional membership in mainstream churches. Drawing on Peter Berger's work on the Sociology of Religion, the classic statement of the secularization thesis is 'the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols' (Berger 1967: 107). Consumer culture's influence on contemporary religious practice holds the potential to further accelerate secularization in Protestant churches by embracing secular models of church life that supplant traditional practices - the secular becomes sacred and the sacred becomes secular (Black and Caldor, 2001).

Evangelical churches that fully embrace consumer culture run the risk of losing their opportunity to shape and “inform” the cultural context in which they are located. The emphasis on producing programs and materials to market to religious consumers - including internal constituencies (members) of churches - shifts resources that might otherwise be used to address community needs or equip church members to be more civically engaged. Consequently, consumer religion may lead to a precipitous decline in spiritual capital. It is suggested that this is an important research issue for scholars of contemporary religion across all religious groups, including Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and emerging religions.

Conclusions and Implications

The rampant consumerism inherent in contemporary consumer capitalism represents an unheralded “symbolic crusade” in modern evangelical churches. Sociologist Joseph Gusfield (1986) applied the concept of the symbolic crusade to Prohibition, noting that Protestants were moral entrepreneurs in their efforts to ban alcohol. Megachurches and churches that have embraced the church growth movement infuse consumer culture into their churches as a sign of their success. By emphasizing cultural relevance as primary and doctrine, church history, and traditional religious practices as secondary, they attempt to have it both ways - serve as both role models for other churches as well as to serve as examples of how to maintain the essence of traditional religious doctrines. A more likely outcome, however, may be a decline in spiritual capital, coupled with greater numbers of profane elements in contemporary evangelical churches (Watson and Scalen, 2008). Churches are social forms that create small communities of like-minded people. To what extent is this process still occurring as the fundamental nature of contemporary religion is rapidly moving from a shaper of culture to a consumer resource to be utilized on the basis of personal interest?

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Lost in Translation: Evangelicals Failed Attempt at Relevance

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Abstract

Since evangelicals discovered the 60's in the early 90's, they have been doing their best imitation of American pop culture. The quest for cultural relevance has become an obsession. In fact, connecting with "moderns" is largely viewed as the superhighway to numerical and financial success. Consequently, the Seeker Sensitive and Purpose Driven models of church growth have become the gold standard of religious organizations in the United States and around the world.

The author takes a critical look at the long term outcomes of this development and asks some hard questions. Based on the REVEAL surveys of many churches, both large and small, evangelicals have essentially redefined Christianity. What went wrong? The author finds the root causes in a fundamental misunderstanding of the anthropological and sociological concept of "culture," philosophical assumptions which are inconsistent with historic Christian teachings, and the practice of excessive contextualism.

Introduction

For several years now, this author and a small band of other academics, theologians, and bloggers have been reporting on a little known but revolutionary movement which has fundamentally changed the way Christians "do church" around the world. The movement has been called by various names largely because of their leaders' desire to "fly below the radar" in order to minimize resistance and ensure the success of their goals. The Church Growth Movement, the Seeker Sensitive Model, the Purpose Driven Church, New Paradigm Churches, and the Emerging Church are all labels which are largely representative of an effort to bring about a second or New Reformation of not only evangelical churches, but religious organizations of all types.

The New Reformation

While no social movement is absolutely consistent throughout and utterly monolithic, this movement comes close. While flying under different flags and different labels, it sets forth several core ideas which have changed little if at all over the last twenty years or so. Interestingly there is no manifesto, no 95 theses nailed to a Wittenberg door: *The Purpose Driven Church* by Rick Warren comes close, but the key ideas of the movement are hidden, perhaps purposely so in slogans, quips, and barbs directed at the traditional church like, "we are not changing the message, we are changing the methods" (Warren, 2005). The central ideas of the movement as this author has come to understand them are as follows:

1. The traditional church is old, out of date, and, worst of all, boring. With its hymns, pews, stained glass, liturgies, and communion cups, it does not connect with moderns. It must be modernized to become culturally relevant.

2. A business/corporate paradigm is the *modus operandi* for reorganizing churches. To build a church (business) you identify the "needs" of your potential members (customers). What do they want? What will attract them, move them, and ultimately sell them. Once you have determined what they "want" (coded as needs), you give it to them. They will come and "purchase" your product, and your church (business) will grow.

3. Contemporary culture is your friend and not your enemy, embrace it. Moderns are accustomed to first class entertainment and amusements. They listen to loud, raucous, simplistic music. They have short attention spans. They demand a high level of service and amenities. They are accustomed to elaborate shopping malls and high tech corporate workplaces. They are marketed twenty-four seven by a myriad of voices; the church must become one of them, perhaps the loudest. If churches can provide first class entertainment, amenities, services, technology, and architecture, then people (consumers) will come and churches will grow.

4. The message must not change, but it must be "reframed" or translated in terms that moderns and post-moderns can understand and connect with. Difficult, obscure, and disturbing theological terms like sin, reconciliation, atonement, judgment, and regeneration must be avoided. Instead, the Christian message is better understood in therapeutic terms like inner healing, rediscovery, vision, success, and

self-realization. People are concerned about their relationships, their personal happiness, their image, and life-achievements. They are grounded in the here and now; therefore, focus on their "best life now." (Osteen, 2004)

5. Old is bad, new is good. All traditions are dull, boring, and irrelevant. Strive for constant, ongoing change. Eliminate all traditions and avoid making new ones. Avoid traditional sermons of all kinds such as Easter, Christmas, Mother's Day, and Father's Day, Memorial Day or any other traditional holidays. Focus on fresh, relevant, and life changing topics like finding success and satisfaction in your relationships, your career, or your avocations like motorcycling, golfing, or other sports. The latest is the greatest, and the newest is the truest.

6. Embrace generationalism in all its forms. Remember, each generation is in the process of creating its own culture. Churches must be able to discern the emerging culture of each new generation and connect with its members on their own terms. This means that all churches must be atomized or divided along generational lines and "ministries," which is code for amenities, amusements, and services, must be tailored to the needs of each group. This is an ongoing process because new cultures are emerging daily.

7. Focus on the young. If you attract (market) the young, their parents or guardians will follow. Make sure the face (image) of your congregation is fresh (attractive) and youthful. Tailor everything to the young, your music, your art, your technology. If you want to stay on the cutting edge you must think hip and trendy.

This author has personally witnessed two "transitions" of churches into the model described above, but in neither case were the goals clearly announced, debated, or voted on. The transitions were clandestine in nature, but every belief, value, and idea expressed above was acted out in detail. It soon became obvious that one could disregard what was said and only watch what was done. As a career social scientist, this author has never witnessed a more clever, systemic, and all encompassing organizational change occur in such a short time, ever, anywhere. All things became new and the same as every other church that was going through the transition. The stereotypical "sameness" of New Paradigm churches is stunning and indisputable. From coast to coast, north to south, they look the same, sound the same, and speak the same. They represent a complete, thorough, all encompassing culture shift that is likely unprecedented in the history of religious organizations.

Prophets, Priests, and Early Dissenters

As the movement was gaining traction in the early nineties a few brave souls raised the specter of protest but to no avail. Their concerns were largely ignored and the movement rolled over all resistance like a runaway Abrams tank. John MacArthur, pastor of the 10,000 member Grace Community Church in California published a book in 1993 entitled *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes like the World* (MacArthur, 1993). He minced few words in claiming that the modern Seeker Sensitive and Purpose Driven churches were moving away from foundational Christian doctrines towards a user-friendly, worldly, flesh based, pragmatic gospel, that was in fact, no Gospel at all. A year later philosopher/theologian Os Guinness published *Dining with the Devil: the Megachurch Movement Flirts with Modernity* (Guinness, 1994). He claimed that evangelicals had become so captive to the thinking of the modern world that Christianity's impact on the culture was diminishing, while the culture's impact on churches was increasing. He described modernity as the ultimate alternative to the Kingdom of God and claimed that it was rapidly taking captive of churches like ancient Egypt took captive of the Hebrews. He stated that modern evangelicals had embraced modern business practices which are often counter to their own belief systems.

According to Guinness the more the new paradigm church succeeds the more it fails at representing historic Christianity. Guinness adds that,

"Christian assumptions are absorbed by the modern ones. The Gospel has been assimilated to the shape of culture, often without remainder (Guinness, 1994, p.56)

Two of the foremost American religious scholars weighed in on the debate in 2000 and 2003 respectively. Professor Martin Marty of the University of Chicago noted that modern evangelicalism had shifted from "otherworldliness to this worldliness," and that evangelical churches have become less inclined to advocate a high standard of conduct and have become more inclined to do whatever is necessary to attract prospective customers (Marty, 200:760). Religious scholar Alan Wolfe sets forth a similar view. He claims that evangelical churches are turning away from historical religious ideals and moving toward a kind of pragmatic materialism (Wolfe, 2003).

Wolfe expressed alarm that New Paradigm churches were embracing corporate business culture, pop psychology, and pop culture in general.

This author along with his close friend and colleague, Dr. J.B. Watson, has written extensively on this subject. We have delivered numerous presentations, co-authored a book chapter, and contributed to scholarly journals. This author has met with pastors, church leaders, and other engineers of the movement, without significant consequence. For the most part questions are viewed with disdain. Of significant concern is the clandestine way churches are "transitioned" into a new reality.

Rick Warren, the most visible leader of the movement, calls himself a "stealth evangelist" and suggests that that his ideas have flown under the radar into churches of all kinds including "Catholics, Methodists, Mormons, Jews, and ordained women" (Grossman, 2003, 3). The book *Transitioning: Leading Your Church Through Change* written by Dan Southerland and the "Transitioning Conferences" both endorsed by Rev. Warren shed light on the strategies recommended for implementing the Purpose Driven Model into existing churches (Southerland, 2000). Southerland recommends that an inner circle of confidants work out the details and the general congregation should not become part of the process until the transition is complete (Southerland, 2000). Furthermore, resisters are to be dealt with sternly. In an interview with the Wall Street Journal, Southerland stated that "you've got to play hardball; you can't placate every whiny Christian along the way" (Sataline, 2006). Speakers at a Church Transitions Inc workshop in Austin, Texas in a session called "dealing with opposition" reportedly recommended that members who do not stop objecting should be asked to leave. They also recommended that pastors would call the new churches of these disposed dissenters and suggest that they be "barred from any leadership role" (Sataline, 2006). When exactly did deception, manipulation, and reprisals become Christian virtues?

Interestingly, some of the movements own supporters have had second thoughts. Pastor Samuel Rima in his book *Rethinking the Successful Church* identifies himself as an advocate of megachurches and the church growth movement in general and even states that the "Willow Creeks and Saddlebacks are a wonderful gift of God" (Rima, 2002, p.22). However, he writes

"It's interesting to note that, in spite of the current emphasis on the various formulas for ministry success, the Scriptures are all but silent on the

subject of church growth. As you survey the New Testament writings of the apostle Paul, you can't help but be struck by the stark absence of any advice or specific recommendations that even remotely resemble today's church-growth strategies. Instead, there seems to be an almost obsessive focus on faithfulness in ministry and standing firm against the pervasive pull of a crumbling and godless culture. There is nothing said about attempting to appeal to popular culture. On the contrary, there seems to be a strong emphasis on remaining free from the influence of culture and focusing on the simple proclamation of the "foolish" gospel (Rima, 2002, pp. 36-37).

The Early Returns

From the early nineties, when New Paradigm leaders first discovered the sixties, to the near present, the revolutionary new paradigm for doing church has become a smashing success. The numbers are up and the money just keeps rolling in. Rick Warren has trained over 400,000 pastors and Bill Hybels consulting firm has over ten thousand customers (Symonds et al., 2005). Megachurches are popping up like mushrooms with their landing strip size parking lots, corporate looking structures, mall like amenities from work out centers to coffee shops, and Disney inspired children's facilities. Business is good. Only one question remains, did this second reformation succeed in changing the methods without affecting the message? Did Christianity survive the makeover?

The Report Card Is In

It was evitable that corporate style, business-oriented, consumeristic organizations would eventually conduct customer satisfaction surveys. Well they did and the results are in. A survey constructed by some leaders of Willow Creek Community Church in suburban Chicago and one of the prime movers of the Church Growth Movement for over twenty years yielded some unexpected findings. Ironically, REVEAL has turned into another business marketed by Willow Creek. There are REVEAL books, materials, conferences, and currently over 500 churches have participated in the survey and their number are growing daily. However, the results of the initial study conducted at Willow Creek have raised serious questions about the

ministry paradigm that made the church famous. Results from other New Paradigm churches have yielded similar findings.

While specific data from Willow Creek is not accessible, church leaders have issued statements about the findings. Bill Hybels, Willow Creek's pastor called the outcomes "earth shaking," "ground breaking" and "mind blowing." It appears that the Church Growth engineers were wrong. Their methods have produced numbers but not disciples. Hybels laments:

"Some of the stuff that we have put millions of dollars into thinking it would really help our people grow and develop spiritual, when the data actually came back it wasn't helping people that much. Other things that we didn't put that much money into and didn't put much staff into are stuff our people are crying out for.....We made a mistake" (Hybels, 2007).

A recent Christianity Today article entitled "Willow Creek's Huge Shift," reports that the church has "sporadically recognized it was not teaching a robust enough biblical theology and needed to turn the ship around" (Branaugh, 2008). The REVEAL survey, however, supplied overwhelming evidence that their marketing ethos is attracting customers but failing to reproduce Biblical or historically Christian patterns of thinking and behavior.

One megachurch that has been very forthright and specific about some of the results produced by their REVEAL survey is Granger Community Church in Granger, Indiana. On one of the church's ministry websites, BecausePeopleMatter.com, it is reported that 57% of those attending Granger "do not believe in the authority of the Bible," and that "56% of those attending Granger do not believe Jesus is the only way to eternal life," a foundational doctrine of historic Christianity (Waltz, 2008). While admitting that "we have failed miserably," the pastor and an assistant pastor at Granger end their report by saying "we couldn't be happier," a strange mix of lament and defiance.

As similar reports come in from New Paradigm churches around the U.S. and the world, one gets the impression that ecclesiastical "spin machines" are hard at work to decipher the "silver lining" in all this, but just as few seemed to be able to grasp the contradictions in their core methodologies in the beginnings of the movement, few now will be willing to return to traditional patterns. The movement may

redefine their target audience, and miss the more important point that promoting or advancing one culture is unlikely to be successful when you are imitating an opposing culture. As "George" in the Seinfeld series once said, "a George divided against itself, cannot stand."

What Went Wrong?

It is probably not too simplistic to say that the core ideas driving the New Paradigm Church movement are simply inconsistent with historic Christianity. In a way nothing could be more ironic, and transparently simple. But, the devil is in the details. Despite its enormous popularity and early "success," this movement was doomed from the beginning, which is all the more tragic because its leaders, who have invested their careers, fortunes, and reputations, will likely push forward without ever examining the foundational flaws on which their efforts are based.

Contextualism Gone Wild

Contextualism in its most benign form is simply the attempt to communicate with people who are different. Some degree of cultural accommodation is inevitable; it is largely a matter of courtesy and common sense. Extreme forms of contextualism, however, result in wholesale imitation and ultimately diminish ones own identity. One of the little examined assumptions of the rabid contextualism that is driving many "progressive" evangelical Christians to adopt every conceivable cultural form as a means of evangelism is that cultural forms are considered to be largely neutral. For example, heavy metal music is associated with a relatively well defined youth sub culture. To reach this group, it is assumed that the Gospel message can be carried by such cultural forms as skulls and other death symbols and yet the message remains intact, unscathed and unchanged. Thus, the magic bullet of the New Christianity: the methods change, but the message doesn't. As mentioned early this idea is wildly popular, repeated *ad infinitum* on a daily basis by the millions who consider it an unquestioned and absolute edict. From "Jesus Mosques" to reach Moslems to "Jesus Meditation" to reach mystics, there are no limits to which so-called "European Christianity" must be reshaped to fit every conceivable cultural form.

There are several assumptions on which this line of thinking is based: multiculturalism, relativism, and a simplistic understanding of culture. First, multiculturalism is the position that all cultures are equal because there is no objective standard for evaluating them. This idea is based on philosophical relativism which in its crudest form results in the total absence of standards. Ultimately nothing can be determined to be good or evil because all things are just different. These ideas give rise to the notion of cultural neutrality. Since all cultures are equal, since nothing can be seen as superior or better, *ergo*, any cultural form can "carry" any cultural idea.

What is missing? First, the largest and most influential cultures of the world were historically related to religions with exclusive truth claims. The Near Eastern cultures built on Islam, the Far Eastern Cultures built on Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism and other religions, and Western culture built largely on the foundation of Christianity all claim to be correct and true assessments of reality. Since culture is a shared reality, it is a coherent and largely consistent set of ideas, ideals, values, and norms which produce predictable forms of art, music, family systems, political arrangements, and other cultural outcomes. Historically, the form is typically consistent with the content. In other words, particular ways of thinking produce particular ways of acting. For example, distinctively different kinds of architecture are produced by distinctively different kinds of ideas. The mosque, the cathedral, and the temple are reflections of the cultures that create and build them. Similarly, the notions of multiculturalism and relativism may be dominant ideas in the modern mind, but they too claim exclusive right to the truth, ironically, a violation of their central idea, and they produce predictable outcomes.

The notion that cultural forms can be used interchangeably fails to understand the extent to which every cultural form is implicated, shaped, and formed by the values, standards, or beliefs of a particular culture. In essence, cultural forms are not neutral and cannot be somehow totally emptied of their exclusive views of reality. For example, the Christian Faith is a culture, it makes distinctive truth claims, and it is shaped by a core set of beliefs, values, and practices. But for some so called "progressive" Christians "the Faith once delivered to the saints" is like cultural silly putty that can be molded and shaped into any form and combined with any other set of practices without consequence. For the naive and unwary, imitation is the road to extinction, and the absence of boundaries diminishes and ultimately destroys identity.

Syncretism has always been the danger of excessive contextualism, but somehow the "we are changing the methods not the message" slogan has so resonated with many Christians anxious to see progress in evangelism and growth in numbers that caution has been thrown to the wind. Assuming that all cultural forms are neutral, almost anything is now "worship," and virtually any outreach method is appropriate for "fishers of men." This poignant phrase used by Jesus in Matthew 4:19 is widely taken to mean that people should be "lured" into the Kingdom by any means necessary, even deception, in the same fashion that fisherman in the modern era use "lures" to catch fish. The problem with this view is ironically one of context; the fisherman in Biblical times used nets. This approach had much more to do with location and timing than enticement.

Theologically and Biblically, the key assumption driving many evangelistic techniques and church growth methods is that the work of the Spirit can be accomplished by the means of the flesh. This notion produces much "strange fire;" however, the proponents of this idea claim prodigious numbers. "It works," they say, "look at the bottom line, many are converted!" But what are they converted to? Is it possible that the methods used are so overwhelmingly powerful and the message communicated is so distorted, that "converts" are responding to the familiar rather than being transformed by the unfamiliar?

Conclusion

In the final analysis, the New Paradigm churches are a violation of the "truth in advertising" principle; they aren't who they say they are. It is like a new nation flying under the flag of an ancient people. Historic Christianity as a culture is largely incompatible with the ideas, beliefs, and values of modern corporate business systems, American pop culture, and humanistic psychology. Nevertheless, the leaders of the movement will likely forge ahead in their efforts to remake an ancient tradition. Ultimately, they will confuse seekers and frustrate disciples, and the more they "succeed," the more they will "fail."

Biographical Note

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The Gospel of Spiritualism: A Study of Seminary Students and Their Call to the Ministry

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Introduction

In his play *Our Town*, Thornton Wilder had one of his characters say "...we all know that nature's interested in *quantity* but, you know, I think she's interested in *quality* too, and that's why I'm in the ministry..." (1938) The sentiment conveyed in this quotation represents how the decision to pursue a life in the ministry can take on a wide range of forms depending upon not only an individual's spiritual discernment, but also the private rationale contemplated by the person when heeding the "call to the ministry." Everyone who chooses to enroll in a seminary program (with the intention of becoming an ordained minister) does so for very personal reasons that involve a multitude of factors, not least of which is the personal relationship the person has with God—but which may also include familial, social, financial and even emotional considerations. The call to service is largely assumed to be pastoral in nature, but can be in the form of missionary, educational, counseling or social work. In the majority of these cases, people look to an established seminary, theological/divinity school, or graduate program as preparation for this type of work once they have received their calling and have made the decision to serve God and humanity in this capacity.

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

The word "vocation" comes from the Latin verb *vocare*, which means "to call." Vocation as "calling" has dominated how it is understood in religious contexts. For many who are considering being ordained,

the idea of call is something literal: The voice of God speaks, directing the listener to a life of ministry. For others, the idea of call is figurative: It might come as a feeling, a kind of knowing, a crazy idea that won't leave, a sense that this is the work they are meant to do in the world. Sometimes call is understood as the pattern that emerges in a string of events. Other times the voices calling belong to friends and family or to the words on the pages of a book. (Sentilles, 1)

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

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

In the case of the religion of Spiritualism, this is also true, but a distinct difference between the two traditions is an overwhelming majority of Spiritualist ministers were not raised in the religion but converted as adults, and at a much later point in their life decided to pursue the ministry as a vocation. (Leonard, 175, 184) In addition, the majority of Spiritualist ministers actually was raised in either a Protestant or Catholic household and attended church regularly (or somewhat regularly) while growing up.

(Leonard, 175) However, at some point during their spiritual search, these individuals left the denomination or church of their childhood and early adult life and began to seek more deeply—often hopping from one religion to another—until finally happening upon the Gospel of Spiritualism which on some higher level resonated in them enough to not only become Spiritualists but also to embark upon the path of developing their mediumship and becoming ordained Spiritualist ministers.

This paper investigates the call to the ministry among seminary students studying towards becoming ordained ministers in the religion of Spiritualism. The participants in this study were enrolled at the “Chesterfield Spiritualist Seminary” under the tutelage of the *Indiana Association of Spiritualists* (IAOS) which is housed at historic “Camp Chesterfield”¹ in central Indiana. This study endeavors to ascertain the spiritual and social factors that influenced these individuals to pursue a call to the ministry by examining their personal data, spiritual and familial backgrounds, seminary studies and mediumship development, preparation for the ministry, and other extenuating factors that were involved in their decision to follow the call to the ministry. In addition, a component was included that focused upon their studies in the seminary and how they view their future as an ordained minister in Spiritualism regarding their livelihood.

Seminary Overview

The Chesterfield Spiritualist Seminary offers certification in the areas of Spiritual Healing, Medium Missionary, Associate Minister, and Ordination. Each area requires the completion of a number of “Core Classes” that are prerequisites for each certification level.² Each year, a variety of “elective” classes are offered which vary between each scheduled seminary according to the available teachers who are scheduled to teach, taking into account their particular area of expertise.

¹ The *Indiana Association of Spiritualists* was founded in 1886 and moved to its current headquarters on the grounds of “Camp Chesterfield” in 1891. (Harrison, 14) The “Chesterfield Spiritualist Academy” has been a center of learning since 1933. (*Academic Resource Center* (ARC) Handbook, 2008)

² For a complete listing of all required courses for certification at the *Chesterfield Spiritualist Seminary*, see Appendix A. For a complete listing of course descriptions of the required classes, see Appendix B.

Unlike many Christian-based seminary programs, the Chesterfield Spiritualist Seminary only offers classes toward certification on a “part-time” basis. During every academic year, three “weeklong” seminars are scheduled during the spring, summer and autumn that offer classes from Monday through Friday. Several other times throughout the year, “mini-seminaries” are held which often coincide with long holiday weekends. These shorter seminars are scaled down versions of the longer ones, offering fewer classes, but the same amount of contact hours for each course as the weeklong seminars.

Students who enroll at the Chesterfield Spiritualist Seminary are primarily fulltime workers who are studying toward ordination in their free time. The majority of these students are older; many first began taking classes out of “spiritual curiosity” or as a way to learn, in general terms, about New Age spirituality, metaphysical topics, and the religion of Spiritualism. Most likely, many did not initially intend to study for any particular certification level but later decided to pursue a life in the ministry after enrolling in courses and developing their mediumship with a certified teacher.

Once a decision is made to pursue certification as an Associate or Ordained Minister, seminary students at Chesterfield Spiritualist Seminary are expected to work diligently on their mediumship ability, as well as to participate actively outside of the scheduled seminars on platform work³ and to prepare and present sermons.⁴ In addition, students who are preparing for the testing portion of their particular level are required during officially scheduled seminars to develop formally their mediumship with a certified development teacher (daily) and in the form of public demonstrations

³ This is a public demonstration of mediumship, usually in a Spiritualist church service. The term comes from the fact that the mediums stand on a raised “platform” at the front of the church to deliver Spirit messages to those in attendance.

⁴ Spiritualist church sermons (often referred to as lectures) should be based, in principle, upon a passage from a sacred text. Lectures, although frequently regarded as “sermons,” do not necessarily require that the pulpit message be based on a sacred text, but often do. Spiritualism, as a religion, accepts the truths from all religious traditions; hence, students are free to select scripture from any religious tradition’s sacred writings when preparing sermons. However, because a large percentage of Spiritualists were either raised in or exposed to Christianity while growing up, many seminary students are most comfortable with using the *Holy Bible* as a sacred text for their sermon/lecture preparation.

(usually several times during the week); sermon preparation and public delivery; and to enroll in required and elective classes for that particular certification level. There is ample opportunity for students to fulfill partially these requirements during the scheduled seminaries. As well, in addition to the seminary periods, students are expected regularly to develop their mediumship, prepare and present sermons/lectures, and to continue to present publically their clairvoyance at a recognized Spiritualist church of their choosing.⁵

Since a considerable portion of the seminary students live a fair proximity away from Camp Chesterfield, it is necessary for these aspiring ministers to work in tandem with a Spiritualist church in the area where they live. Many students also receive mediumship development from a certified medium (who is usually, but not always, an ordained Spiritualist minister) on a regular basis in their geographical area. Students who live within driving distance from Camp Chesterfield frequently opt to enroll in a resident medium's⁶ weekly development class, as well as participate in special "student services" which are offered weekly to allow students an opportunity to practice their mediumship and sermon presentation in a public setting.

The Chesterfield Spiritualist Seminary is specifically designed to cater to students who are more mature in age; who have regular, fulltime employment; and who want and need one-on-one instruction. Generally, the class sizes tend to be quite small with substantial opportunity for frequent contact with teachers and resident faculty (inside and outside the classroom). This trend of seminary students being well into their first or second careers before deciding to pursue work toward ordination is traditionally the case at Chesterfield Spiritualist Seminary. This is largely due to the fact that few are "lifelong Spiritualists" (meaning they were not raised in the religion by

⁵For certification requirements, see Appendix B.

⁶ A "resident medium" is one who owns and maintains a home as a primary domicile on the grounds of Camp Chesterfield. Spiritualism is a religion that had its early beginnings in the form of "camp meetings." Each summer, during "season", mediums would set up tents to give readings to visitors. After time, these tents eventually gave way to more permanent dwellings in the form of one or two room "shanties." These modest buildings were gradually expanded in size and amenities to become actual residential homes. Today, there are over fifty homes inhabited by ministers, mediums and members on the grounds of Camp Chesterfield. (Ono, 2008)

Spiritualist parents).

Students are allowed to enroll in up to six classes during a weeklong seminary, which meet daily (Monday through Friday) for 50 minutes. The classes are intensive in nature and are designed to offer an overview of the subject matter presented. Students are then expected to use this experience as a springboard to research independently the course material after the class finishes. During the presentation portions of the lectures, students are expected to complete detailed “study sheets” for each core and required class to prepare adequately for the written and oral testing sections for each level. Students are encouraged to contact the resident and guest teachers, outside the classroom, to inquire further should they have any questions regarding the subject material presented.

Once all the requirements are met: including the core, required and necessary number of elective courses for that particular level—and the independent study requirements in the form of public mediumship demonstrations, platform work and sermon presentations—students may then petition the Board of Trustees, through the Dean of Students, their eligibility and intentions to be tested. In the case of Ordination, students who have fulfilled all of the requirements and have satisfactorily passed both the oral and written tests, are then ordained formally into the Spiritualist ministry in a public ceremony in the chapel or cathedral located on the grounds of Camp Chesterfield.

The Research Study

The purpose of this study is to determine what social and religious influences, if any, are present in seminary students’ decisions to pursue ordination in the religion of Spiritualism. In addition, the study endeavors to learn the religious and/or spiritual backgrounds of the participants of this study, their attitudes toward religion and spiritual-based beliefs, and what role, if any, these played in their decisions to begin the process of becoming Spiritualist ministers. The “call to the ministry” aspect is included in the study to ascertain what factors were present which influenced the subjects to pursue the ministry in the Gospel of Spiritualism. A further intention of this study is to qualify the experiential components involved in the mediumship development portion of the calling.

A number of questions were set forth in a questionnaire⁷ to postulate these hypotheses. Specifically, the study was divided into seven parts: Personal Data, Religious/Spirituality Background, Seminary Studies/Mediumship Development, Call to the Ministry, Preparation for the Ministry, Future Tenure as a Spiritualist Minister, and Family Background.⁸ The study was conducted using seminary students enrolled in classes at the Chesterfield Spiritualist Seminary, Indiana. The only criterion was that the participants had the intention—at the time they participated in this study by completing the questionnaire—to pursue their studies until fruition of becoming an ordained Spiritualist Minister.

A majority of the subjects were selected through referral, meaning that once a core group of seminary students was selected through personal contacts, these people then distributed the questionnaire on to other seminary students with the above criterion in place. This type of research sampling is referred to as “snowball sampling.”

In snowball sampling researchers identify a small number of individuals who have characteristics in which they are interested. These people are then used as informants to identify, or put researchers in touch with, others who qualify for inclusion and these, in turn, identify yet others—hence the term snowball sampling. This method is useful for sampling a population where access is difficult, maybe because it is a sensitive topic or where communication networks are underdeveloped. The task for the researcher is to establish who are the critical or key informants with whom initial contact must be made. (Cohen, *et al*, 104)

A decision was made early on to keep the study small in order to extrapolate data in a manageable manner. Although the primary instrument (fieldwork questionnaire) utilized a combination of a Likert scale (e.g. “please mark accordingly—strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree”) and

⁷ See Appendix C.

⁸ This questionnaire was adapted from one done by Loessin (2004) on the call to the Christian ministry.

checklist scale (e.g. “please check the items that pertain to you”), several portions of the questionnaire involved more open-ended questions, generating a large amount of research data that needed to be collated and interpreted.

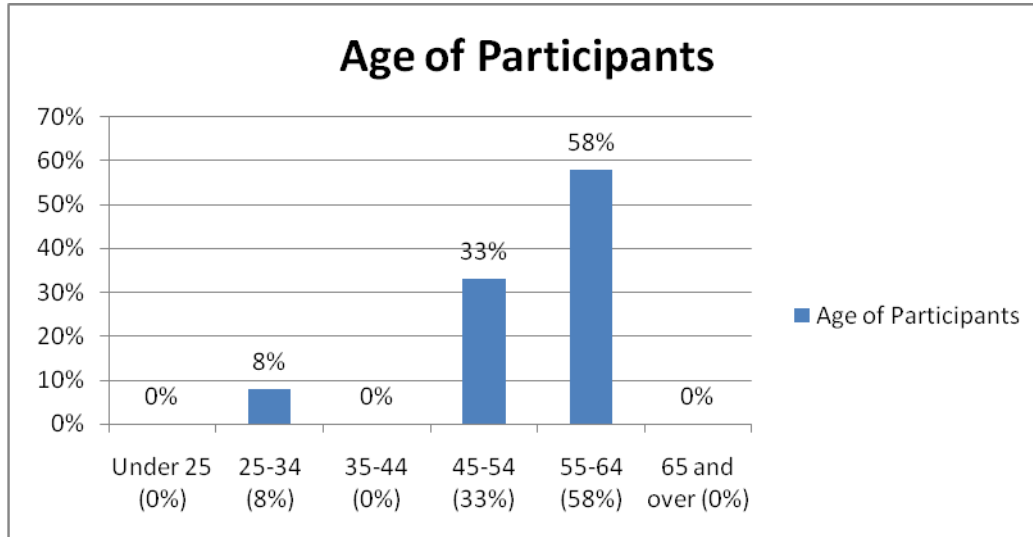
In retrospect, perhaps a survey that encompassed only a checklist or rating method might have made it easier to collocate and analyze the data generated, but ultimately it was decided to combine both configurations in the question design in order not to limit the subjects in their responses. Also, I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

Descriptive Analysis of the Participants’ Demographic Data

Eight percent of the participants indicated they were between the ages of “25-34”; 33% marked the category of “45-54”; and 58% of the respondents were between the ages of “55-64”.⁹ There were no subjects under the age of twenty-five or over the age of 65. Interestingly, no participant marked the category “35-44”, which was somewhat surprising in that conventional wisdom would seem to suggest that this would be an ideal time personally to start studies toward a higher degree. One possible explanation is that many of the participants who were older (55-64) indicated that they had one or more children; perhaps embarking upon an education program once the children are grown is more appealing than to pursue studies while trying to raise children. The age group “35-44” would be at a period in an average person’s life where familial obligations might be such that it would be difficult (time wise or financially) to pursue new studies. This is all subjective, as there is no way to ascertain the reasons why this particular study had no people between the ages of “35-44”. The majority of the participants in this study were nearing or at retirement age, which could be indicative of having experienced a career, thus having fewer familial obligations which subsequently allowed them the freedom to pursue ministerial studies.

⁹ See Figure 1.

Figure: 1



The gender of the participants was predominately female (83%) with a smaller percentage male (17%).¹⁰ This data is especially telling in that the majority of the subjects were female which is in direct contrast to mainstream Christian seminary programs.¹¹ This is quite representative, however, of the religion of Spiritualism. More women have traditionally been mediums, as well as ordained ministers, throughout Spiritualism's colorful and long history.

Spiritualism and spirit communication, first started by the young Fox sisters, eventually served to offer women an active voice in religion, as well as positions of authority in churches, at a time when women were largely relegated to doing housework and to raising a family. Eventually, Spiritualism would give women a vocation—a career—in which they could nurture a profession that was separate from their

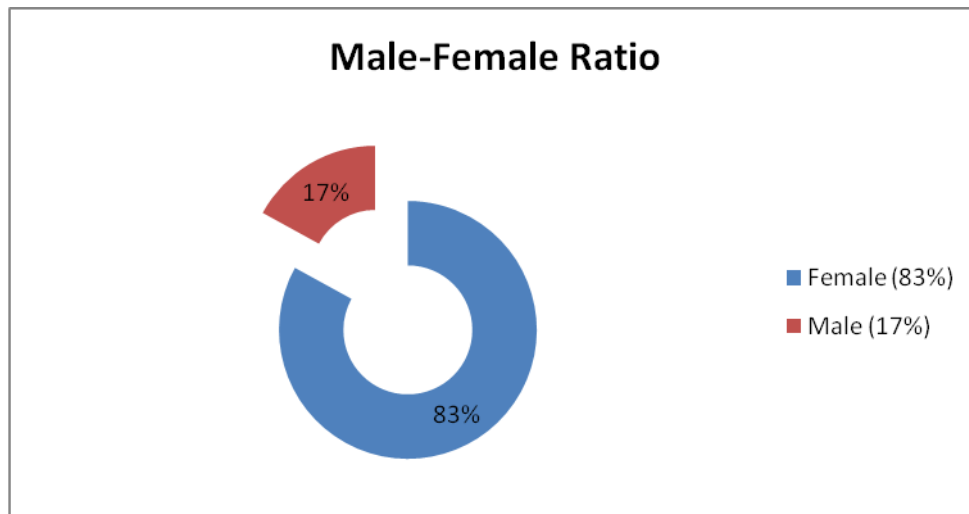
¹⁰ See Figure 2.

¹¹ In a research study done by Loessin (2004) on the call to ministry of Christian ministers, the percentage of male participants was roughly 84% with women at 16%--nearly opposite the male-female ratio in this study on Spiritualist seminary students.

dependence upon any male figure (whether it be a husband, father, brother, uncle, grandfather, or son). (Leonard, 165)¹²

Spiritualism played an important role in the inception of women's rights, with Spiritualist female ministers and mediums campaigning aggressively and actively for women's suffrage. (Goldsmith, xiii)

Figure: 2



Another possible explanation for the predominance of women choosing to develop their mediumship and pursue ministerial studies is related to the male-female energy that is necessary when doing this type of clairvoyance work. Women tend to be more able to tap into the “female” energy, allowing them to develop their mediumship more easily and quickly (in most instances).

...we are all electromagnetic, and we all have male/female energy—which is not sexual. When you do mediumship, you use the “feminine” energy more than the “male” energy. (Brown, 2004)

¹² This data correlates directly with an earlier, more expansive study I conducted between 2001 and 2004 on Spiritualism and mediumship. The data in that study placed women at 82% and men at 18%. (Leonard, 164)

Perhaps this helps to explain why gay men are often attracted to mediumship and Spiritualism as a religion; in most Spiritualist camps and churches, there are always a significant number of gay men who are not only mediums but also who are ordained ministers—something that is frowned upon categorically by the majority of mainstream Christian denominations. This is explained by Brown (2004):

Many straight men are uncomfortable with tapping into this female energy. Gay men are more comfortable tapping into it, so more male mediums tend to be “gay.” Straight men are often conditioned from childhood to deny their feminine energy-side, so they do not tap into it very much. Society tends to emphasize to men that they are not supposed to “feel”; for instance, “real men don’t cry.” You can’t be a medium without being able to feel deeply.

In a future study, it would be interesting to include more subjects and a section on sexual orientation to delineate concretely this hypothesis that gay men are more likely to be mediums and Spiritualist ministers than straight men. No doubt, part of the attraction to Spiritualism by gay men and women, in general, is the religion’s attitude toward salvation (*i.e.* “all souls are redeemable”) and the idea that being homosexual is but one of the many varieties of people who inhabit God’s earthly garden. There is no moral judgment made because Spiritualists are “free thinkers” who are often on the cutting edge of social acceptance of the downtrodden. The point being that well before mainstream society was ready to accept men and women as equals, Spiritualism gave women a voice in its churches and in society; Spiritualists also worked tirelessly for universal suffrage, the abolition of slavery, and fostered nonviolence as a way to mediate disagreements between nations. (NSAC, 2001)

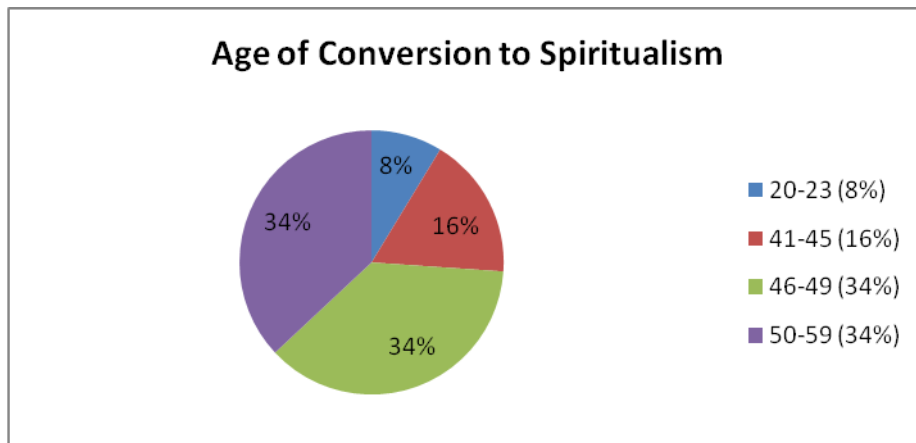
The majority of the subjects indicated they came from middle/lower to middle class backgrounds and from smaller cities or towns. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents described their families as extended—large, including parents, grandparents and others. The subjects described their household while growing up to be both maternalistic (50%) and paternalistic (50%).

Research Data on the Religious and Spiritual Backgrounds of the Participants

One-hundred percent of the participants indicated that they were not “lifelong

Spiritualists,” all having either found the religion on their own or having converted from another religion as an adult. Eight percent of the respondents indicated that they converted to Spiritualism between the ages of “20-23”; 16% marked the category “41-45”; 34% converted between the ages of “46-49”; and 34% indicated that they became Spiritualists between the ages of “50-59”.¹³

Figure: 3



Because none of the participants were raised in the religion of Spiritualism, they were instructed to list all religions or spiritual traditions they followed up to the point they converted to Spiritualism. With the exception of two respondents, all indicated that they had followed one or more religions prior to becoming Spiritualists. In a number of cases, several different traditions were listed. For example, *Subject B* listed Methodist, Presbyterian, Agnostic, Unitarian, and Methodist again before converting to Spiritualism in her late 50s. *Subject D* (aged 46-49) listed Baptist, Agnostic, New Age, Baptist again, New Age again, Unity, and then Spiritualism. Roughly 70% of the participants had multiple experiences in a variety of denominations, including: Presbyterian, Methodist, Unitarian, Baptist, Church of God, Episcopalian, The Way Ministry, Catholic, Salvation Army, Congregationalist and Unity.

This phenomenon of “religion hopping” is common among Spiritualists in that the average “Spiritualist convert” tests the waters in a variety of religious and spiritual traditions before settling on following the tenets of Spiritualism. This trend also

¹³ See Figure 3.

partially explains why the average age of Spiritualist seminary students tend to be much older; they most likely spent their younger years trying to find a tradition which resonated genuinely and deeply from within them, until they eventually happened upon the Gospel of Spiritualism.

Seventy percent of the respondents indicated that they attended church “weekly” while growing up which suggests that religion was an important part of their lives during their formative years. It was in adulthood that the majority of the subjects began experimenting with different denominations of Christianity and other spiritual traditions before finding Spiritualism and deciding to embrace this religion. *Subject H* stated as an addendum: “I was not a member of one religious organization. I went to every church in town until the age of 52 and then I became a Spiritualist.”

Since Spiritualist churches are not so common in some regions of the United States, it is not surprising that the average age of the subjects who converted to Spiritualism was higher than what would normally be expected. Many had no exposure to mediumship or Spiritualism until a later time in their lives. Even after conversion, it is sometimes difficult for Spiritualists to find an active church in their area. *Subject L* related: “I attend the Episcopal Church of my teen years because there are no Spiritualist churches in my home state.” Often, Spiritualist seminary students do not have the convenience of being near a Spiritualist congregation, nor enjoy the same type of familial support or have the longtime exposure to the religion like their Christian seminary counterparts.

Seminary Studies/ Mediumship Development

Responses to the survey question which read, “Are you a certified medium?”, 58% of the subjects indicated “no” with 42% indicating “yes.” This seems to suggest that the majority of the students in this study are in the early stages of their seminary studies as the process at Chesterfield Spiritualist Seminary requires certification as “Medium Missionary” before being allowed to become an “Associate Minister” or an “Ordained Minister.”

However, a related section was included for the subjects to circle all of the courses they had taken at the time of the survey. Unexpectedly, a very high percentage had taken numerous classes, but had not tested for the levels for which the classes pertained. This would suggest that the students surveyed may have some type of hesitation in pursuing formally the various levels through testing. In addition, students

were asked in a later section of the survey to indicate what they experienced as the greatest potential barrier to initiating their studies towards becoming a Spiritualist minister and 50% of the subjects selected “lack of confidence in your mediumship abilities.” This helps to explain why students may be reticent about testing because in order to test they must demonstrate publically a number of times their mediumship abilities.

Unlike an oral presentation in the form of a sermon where one can prepare and practice before preaching, connecting with Spirit in order to give messages from a platform to strangers, in a church, takes much courage and confidence. Perhaps students prefer to develop privately and in development classes before taking the plunge to do public platform work. There is no specific rule at Chesterfield Spiritualist Seminary that disallows students from taking as many courses as they want without testing. In theory, students could take every class offered before deciding to test at all. It is a personal decision to test, and once a student formally passes the “Medium Missionary” level, he/she would be expected to do regular platform work which is then critiqued by seasoned mediums and teachers. It may be the case where students put off testing until they feel securely connected in the mediumship aspect of their seminary studies.

When asked how many years the subjects expected it would take them—from start to finish—to complete their seminary studies, 25% indicated at least six years; 34% wrote five years; 16% thought it would take 2-3 years; and 25% were not sure how long it would take. This is directly related to the “part-time” component of the program in that the majority of the subjects are either fulltime employees or retired; there is not the same type of urgency to finish quickly as might be the case in Christian-based seminaries where the students fully expect to begin working as clergy upon completion of their studies and ordination into the ministry.

In fact, when asked the question: “Do you plan to derive the bulk of your livelihood from the ministry?”, an astounding 92% of the respondents indicated “no.” Of course, this very likely has a lot to do with the age of the seminary students since many of them are in their 50s and 60s. Realistically, since the majority are more mature in age, they are most likely past the age of wanting or needing another fulltime career, so pursuing studies toward becoming a minister perhaps is not so much for the purpose of having a new “profession” as much as to achieve a personal accomplishment and goal. A number of subjects expounded upon this question by

adding some interesting plans to serve in the Spiritualist ministry:

Subject D: “Working as a guest speaker/medium at area churches.”

Subject E: “Visiting pastor/assistant; pastor at a local church; teaching, speaking, writing; healing, counseling and assisting others; offering readings to people.”

Subject F: “Visiting pastor or maybe bringing my message to people through healing and writing.”

Subject G: “By letting people in my daily life take comfort from me sharing with them that life never stops.”

Subject J: “Giving readings, messages, lectures, seminars, webpage teaching.”

Subject K: “I will go where needed—I’d like, though, to be a visiting minister.”

Subject L: “Visiting clergy; one of several; pastoral care; visitor at hospitals and hospices.”

Many ministers who complete the Chesterfield Spiritualist Seminary through ordination do teach on the faculty as “visiting” or “guest” teachers. Spiritualist churches are not as numerous as their Christian counterparts, so the likelihood of Spiritualist ministers immediately going out and finding a church to hire them—or attempting to start a church—is less likely due to the financial commitment it would take to initiate such an enterprise, not to mention the difficulty in building a congregation to support such a church. According to the results of the survey, the majority of the respondents is realistic about this fact and is happy to serve in collaboration with other established churches as “visiting” clergy and to serve in other ways, as mentioned above.

When trying to discern why the seminary students were willing to take so long to complete their studies, 58% of the respondents indicated that “fulltime work” was the main reason; 42% of the respondents marked “financial reasons”; 8% of the subjects checked “relationship/familial considerations; and 16% of the participants indicated “other” as the motivating reason for taking a longer time to finish their studies. No one marked the category “lack of personal commitment/motivation” as a reason.

When asked at what age the respondents were aware of their mediumistic gifts, the ages ranged from as young as four years old to forty-five years old. In fact, 25% of the respondents indicated they were forty-five years old when they first discovered

their mediumship abilities. The majority, however, realized their gifts much earlier, between the ages of 4-16 (67%). The subjects had varied answers when asked: "What was your first experience with mediumship?"

Subject F: "I saw my joy guide,¹⁴ Tom, as a very young child. He would tell me things that were going to happen. I also experienced what I called 'prophetic dreaming' my entire life—Spirit(s) would come to me in my dreams and give me information."

Subject K: "Seeing little faces at an early age. Speaking with myself to get answers. At grade school, the teachers were always surrounded by yellow light."

Subject L: "Attending readings beginning in young adulthood. What drew me to a commitment to Spiritualism was the death of my youngest sister. A friend suggested that I visit Camp [Chesterfield] as I was deeply grieving and not finding any resolution. My first experience was with a [reverend at Camp Chesterfield]. I sat down and she asked, "Who is Sara?" And I was hooked!"

Many of the subjects related personal stories involving loved ones on the other side, Spirit guides, and dreams as the catalysts in their early mediumship.

When asked, "How do you connect with Spirit on a daily basis?", 100% of the respondents indicated prayer and meditation in their answers. This is not surprising considering the need for mediums to be centered and balanced when doing this type of work. Clearing the mind through meditation and connecting to God through prayer are the two most important ways to prepare oneself when practicing the gift of mediumship.

It is no secret that many mainstream religious denominations look down upon

¹⁴ Spiritualists believe that people have a band of guides that attend to them as "heavenly helpers." The inner band consists of five guides including a doctor/teacher, master, chemist, protector (usually a Native American guide), and a joy guide. The joy guide often presents him/herself to the medium as a child. (Leonard, 319-321)

Spiritualism as a pseudo religion because of the emphasis it places upon “spirit communication” in validating the continuity of life after death. This must be stressful for a seminary student of Spiritualism because of the people who actively try to debunk mediumship and their religion as nonsense or creative fakery. I thought it would be interesting to learn how the seminary students personally respond to such criticism. Several respondents summarily dismissed such criticism as being born out of ignorance, or commented by writing “to each their own.” Others, however, offered very thoughtful and poignant answers to this question.

Subject F: “I just tell them that I can only speak from my own personal experience—what I know to be true. I also point out that the science of quantum physics has many laws that show that there is really no past or future—that all exists in the now.”

Subject H: “I realize not all have experienced Spirit. I just tell them that Jesus is my way-shower, and I work with the Light of God. I bless them and try to prove myself through my words, actions, and deeds.”

Subject J: “I do not push what I believe on them. They should pay me the same respect.”¹⁵

Subject L: “I quote the passages in the Bible that state ‘and your young men will dream dreams and your old men will prophesy.’ Also, the one that says: ‘Jesus said that you, too, can do all these things and more.’

¹⁵ This attitude is very prevalent among Spiritualists as Spiritualism is not an evangelical or missionary religion, instead believing that people who are meant to find Spiritualism do so in “divine order.” Perhaps this is why Spiritualism has not fared as well as two of its cousins, Mormonism and Christian Science. All three are purely American-made and were eventually exported outside of the United States—only Spiritualism was not propagated via missionary and evangelical work. Also, Spiritualism did not have a cult-like personality to lead it like Joseph Smith (Mormonism) or Mary Baker-Eddy (Christian Science).

I also cite I Corinthians 12: 8-11¹⁶ where it states that we are given manifestation of the Spirit, including the gifts of healing, gifts of prophecy, and the gift of distinguishing between spirits.”

Call to the Ministry

The respondents were asked to indicate whether or not there was a specific time in their lives when they sensed a higher calling which led them to pursue the ministry. Sixty-seven percent marked “yes”; 8% marked “no”; and 25% marked “uncertain”. Half of the subjects (50%) indicated that this calling occurred over the age of 30; 17% indicated it occurred between the ages of 19-30; and only 8% received a calling under the age of twelve. No one indicated they received the calling during the bulk of their teen years, between the ages of 13-18.

When asked to select the most influential person used by Infinite Intelligence, God, the Creator, in this “call” experience, 42% of the respondents indicated “spirit guides” by writing this on the blank line marked “other.” Purposefully, I designed this study without specifically listing “spirit guides” in order to ascertain whether or not the seminary students received a calling from Spirit directly. I was worried that by listing “spirit guides” as an option, it might unduly influence the respondents to select it because of the fact that mediumship is such a central component of being an effective Spiritualist minister; it might have pressured them to select it because of what they perceive to be what might be considered the proper or usual way to receive the call to the ministry in Spiritualism. The results are telling in that without having the option explicitly given to them, nearly half of the respondents indicated that they did receive a calling from Spirit (most likely in the form of a clairvoyant, clairsentient, or clairaudient message), which confirms the notion expressed by Burroughs (1962) that Spiritualists often do receive a direct calling from Spirit which prompts them to pursue studies towards becoming a minister.

¹⁶ I Corinthians 12: 8-11: “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit, to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” (*Holy Bible*, King James Version)

Not surprising, no respondents chose “Pastor/Minister” or “Family Member” as being the single most influential person in their call to the ministry. Since all of the subjects were converts to Spiritualism, and none of them were raised in the religion, it stands to reason that other influences effected their decision, unrelated to a church pastor or family. In contrast, Loessin (2004, p. 92) reported in a similar study of Christian clergy that 50% of respondents reported that their pastor or minister was the most influential person in their decision to pursue the ministry. Again, this suggests that Spiritualist seminary students did not have the same spiritual support network regarding their religion that their Christian counterparts had.

In the section asking the respondents to mark all categories that apply to their situation regarding general influence in their decision to pursue seminary studies, I did put “Spirit guide(s)” as an option. This received the most selections of any other category with 75% of the respondents marking this category. The category of “other church or staff member” received the lowest markings with only 8% of the respondents choosing this option. The categories and their percentages are as follows:

General Influence in the Call to the Ministry	
34% Receiving a message at church	67% Visiting a Camp/Church
75% Spirit guide(s)	0% Spiritualist home/parents
25% Family member	42% Counsel of a Spiritualist Minister
34% Friend(s)	58% Attending a message service
25% Pastor/Minister	50% Attending a séance/healing circle
8% Other church staff member	58% Own mediumship development
25% Seminary teacher/instructor	50% Development Teacher

17% Other (please specify) ¹

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

Although a pastor or minister was not the most influential variable in a student's decision to pursue the ministry, 25% of the respondents did indicate that a clergyperson did have some influence in their overall decision.

When asked to whom God led the respondent to for assistance, or who was helpful to the respondent in clarifying or interpreting the "call" experience, 83% indicated their mediumship "development teacher." This is related to a student's need to hone his/her mediumship gifts in order to become an effective minister. It stands to reason that the development teacher the student chooses to work with during his/her entire study period is the most influential person for the student throughout the duration of his/her seminary experience. The development teacher works closely with the student, assisting, critiquing, and guiding him/her in mediumship development. At this point in their call to the ministry, ensconced in the program fully, it is not surprising that students view their development teachers (83%), Spiritualist minister (75%), and their seminary teacher/instructor (34%) as being the ones to assist and help them in clarifying and interpreting this "call" experience.

Although the original call to the ministry was quite personal for the majority of the respondents, indicating that it came from Spirit directly, there were other factors that influenced them in their decision to act upon this call and who helped mentor them as they study and proceed within the Chesterfield Spiritualist Seminary. When asked what single factor among a list of options that is most important to the respondent in successfully working towards certification and training for the ministry, 60% indicated "formal mentoring, tutoring, mediumship development" as their primary choice. This reinforces the prior research data results that Spiritualist seminary students do consider their mediumship abilities—and those who can assist them in this area—as the most important aspect of their ministerial training. This suggests that without the proper mediumship skills, students feel they cannot be effective ministers to do the work they were intended to do.

Conclusion

In point of fact, there were a number of surprising conclusions that came out of this research study. Prior assumptions regarding the age and gender of the participants were contrary to the reality of the current condition. Interestingly, the data was in direct contrast to similar research done with Christian clergy. Historically, women have always been the overriding force within the religion, assuming not only

the role of medium but also teacher and pastor. This is also in direct contrast to many mainstream Christian denominations where women's roles are limited and females are sometimes banned from performing ministerial duties. This is no doubt an appealing aspect of Spiritualism that many women find attractive—the equality of the sexes—hence the overwhelming majority of seminary students being female.

The subjects' ages were on average older than previously assumed. With no respondent indicating they were "lifelong Spiritualists" (all converts to the religion) and with many of them learning about the religion late in life, it stands to reason that the majority of the participants would be more mature in age.

The candidness and honesty of the respondents' answers was refreshing and very much appreciated by this researcher. The rich details of the subjects' seminary studies and mediumship development offered unprecedented insight into the current situation regarding classes, mediumship development, and testing within the Chesterfield Spiritualist Seminary. In the majority of the cases, the participants indicated that they did a fair amount of "religion hopping" before finding Spiritualism as a religion that suited their needs; this attraction, often occurring late in their professional careers, was so strong that they were prompted to pursue studies in the ministry after receiving the "call" from Spirit directly.

One interesting outcome of the study dealt with the hesitation for the seminary students to proceed forward through testing formally, instead preferring to continue to take classes beyond the credits needed for passing the various levels. Perhaps a lack of confidence in their mediumship skills can partially explain this phenomenon, as well as other extenuating factors including time and financial resources. It is quite evident, however, that this has nothing to do with a lack of motivation as all the participants seemed sincere and genuine in their desire to study toward becoming an ordained minister.

The fact that an overwhelming percentage of the subjects surveyed did not expect to receive the bulk of their livelihood after ordination in the ministry was surprising. However, upon further inspection of the current status of the religion in general (*i.e.* few ministers have their own churches), and when considering the maturity of the students, it suggests that the need to become ordained ministers is borne more from a desire to develop spiritually rather than for professional or financial security. In fact, many of the respondents indicated that they would prefer to be "visiting" clergy or assist in ways other than heading their own church.

The research data related to the “call to the ministry” revealed that it is a very personal process and one that takes many forms. While the majority of respondents did in fact indicate that they were directly called to serve by Spirit, there were a number of outside factors that played a role in their decision. Most notably, perhaps, is the fact that “spirit guides” were considered the most important influence used by God to lead the person into the ministry initially. Later, however, the students indicated that their development teachers, Spiritualist ministers, and seminary teachers played very significant roles in their seminary studies and in their calling to the Spiritualist ministry.

This study did have a variety of limitations. Perhaps a larger sampling of subjects would have been preferable in the end to get a more concrete understanding of the overall condition of seminary study currently taking place in Chesterfield Spiritualist Seminary. Also, a reordering of the sections that included more options might have proven more effective in ascertaining more definitively how the respondents regard these somewhat abstract and potentially confusing options. It would have been interesting, as well, to have had the opportunity to interview personally a number of the subjects to further elaborate on areas that needed further explanation regarding their answers and selections on the questionnaire.

In the end, it is hoped that this study offers new insight and research data not previously found in the area of seminary study and the call to the ministry in the religion of Spiritualism. As evidenced in this paper, the call to the ministry is often assumed to be pastoral but can also include a variety of other areas that serve humanity, allowing ordained Spiritualist ministers to heed the call to the ministry in a way that uses their gifts to the best of their ability and to the greatest glory of God.

Biographical Note

Todd Jay Leonard is a professor at Hirosaki Gakuin University, Japan, where he teaches history, comparative culture, and cross-cultural studies. He is the author of twenty books—on topics ranging from American religious history, cross-cultural understanding, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and Spirituality.

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Appendix A: Required Classes for Certification

I. Core Classes

Auras
Chakras
Counseling I
Fundamentals of Spiritualism
Spirit Guides and Guidance
History of Modern Spiritualism
Life After Death
Meditation
Natural Law I
Public Speaking

II Spiritual Healing Classes

Counseling II
Spiritual Anatomy
Spiritual Healing I
Spiritual Healing II
Spiritual Healing Ethics
Healing Addictive Behavior
(Plus 4 Elective Healing Classes)

III Medium Missionary Classes

Beginning Bible Study
Counseling II
Introduction to the Séance Room
Laws of Mediumship
Public Presentation: Mediumship
Semantics
Spiritual Anatomy
Symbols I
(Plus 2 Elective Classes)

IV Associate Minister Classes

Basic Unity of Religions
Counseling III
Death and Dying
Natural Law II
New Testament
Old Testament
Preparation for the Ministry I
Sermon and Lecture
Preparation I
Symbols II
(Plus 1 Elective Class)

V Ordination

Church Business
Ministerial Ethics and Counseling
Parliamentary Procedure
Preparation for the Ministry II
Sacred Writings I
Sacred Writings II
Sermon and Lecture
Preparation II
Spiritualism in the Bible
(Plus 2 Elective Classes)

**[Written and Oral Testing required
at each level of Certification or
Accreditation.]**

Appendix B: Course Descriptions and Requirements

Core Required Classes (C)

Auras: Develop the ability to see and feel the aura. Understand colors seen in the aura and work with aura color in healing and message work.

Chakras: The force centers essential to life; connections, definitions, and factors explained in relation to spiritual growth.

Counseling I: Modern techniques used to deal with modern problems. Your responsibilities and obligations as a counselor will be discussed.

Fundamentals: What is Spiritualism? A look at the principles, definitions, precepts, life after death, planes of existence, and spirit guides.

Guides & Guidance: How and why our teachers become associated with us and how to establish spiritual rapport with them.

History of Modern Spiritualism: A study of the beginnings of modern Spiritualism and of the men and women who founded the movement.

Life After Death: Discusses life in the spirit world; person, places and experiences encountered in the spirit world.

Meditation: How to use meditation techniques for personal growth.

Natural Law I: Laws ruling the physical, mental, and spiritual planes of life; laws determining consequences resulting from choices.

Public Speaking: Practical theory with content, delivery, and appearance application.

[Core Classes are required for any level of Certification or Accreditation by the Chesterfield Spiritualist Seminary and School of Metaphysics.]

Spiritual Healing Required Classes (H)

Counseling II*: Focuses on communication techniques to use with your clients. Also includes an overview of abuse and the many forms it takes, signs and symptoms, cycle of abuse and how to help. **Prerequisite: Counseling I*

Spiritual Anatomy: Associating the etheric and spiritual centers with the physical anatomy.

Spiritual Healing I: Methods, techniques, and philosophy of spiritual healing.

Spiritual Healing II*: The psychology of spiritual healing and practical procedures for public and private practice with prayer, meditation and laying on of hands, utilizing the power of love, intention and intuition. **Prerequisite: Spiritual Healing I*

Spiritual Healing Ethics: Ethical issues faced by the Spiritual Healer. Including, a standard of conduct upon which any healer may safely base a life of healing service.

Healing Addictive Behavior: Learning skills to detach from dependent relationships. Learn about healing thought systems based on love and release of fear.

Spiritual Healing Certification Requirements

IAOS member, in good standing, for one (1) year

20 Credits (10 Core classes, 6 Required classes, 4 Elective Healing classes)

Six (6) Student Healing Services

At least three (3) Healing Services during week long seminary services

Six (6) Notarized Affidavits of Healing Ability

Minimum of Two (2) years study

Medium Missionary Required Classes (M)

Beginning Bible Study: History, structure, translations and versions of the Bible.

Counseling II*: Focuses on communication techniques to use with your clients. Also includes an overview of abuse and the many forms it takes, signs and symptoms, cycle of abuse and how to help. **Prerequisite: Counseling I*

Introduction to the Séance Room: Learn the specifics of a séance such as rules and etiquette, what to expect, how natural law applies, healing and spirit manifestations. Students will experience an actual séance.

Laws of Mediumship: A study of the laws governing mental and physical mediumship. Subjects covered will be clairvoyance, trance, direct voice, apports, spirit card writing and healing.

Public Presentation of Mediumship: Learn the acceptable methods of public and private clairvoyance and platform decorum.

Semantics: Tools of thinking to broaden awareness in communication skills. A study of how belief systems are formed, enhancing communication, and personal beliefs.

Spiritual Anatomy: Associating the etheric and spiritual centers with the physical anatomy.

Symbols I: Understanding universal symbols most used in metaphysical writings and teachings for a basic foundation in symbology.

Medium Missionary Certification Requirements

IAOS member, in good standing, for one (1) year

20 Credits (10 Core classes, 8 Required classes, 2 Elective classes)

Development Classes

Twelve (12) classes with a certified staff development class teacher over a period of three (3) week long seminars. Four (4) classes per seminary with one (1) staff teacher per seminary. Signature of teacher will be required.

Requirement Alternative: Regularly attended at least Twelve (12) classes with a certified staff development class teacher. Signature of teacher will be required.

Student Services Three (3) clairvoyant demonstrations during Seminary Week or Sunday student services.

Minimum of Two (2) years study

Associate Minister Required Classes (A)

Basic Unity of Religions: A study of likenesses and differences in different religious beliefs.

Counseling III*: Exploring addictions, the causes, types, and strategies and the resources to help clients. *Prerequisite: Counseling II*

Death & Dying: Learn about caring for the dying person and his/her family and about the death experience, ritual and emotional issues.

Natural Law II*: Continued study of natural laws of the universe and how to use them to balance our lives. *Prerequisite: Natural Law I*

New Testament: Overview, the Gospels, writings of Paul and other New Testament materials.

Old Testament: Overview, the Torah, prophets, and other Old Testament materials.

Preparation for Ministry I: Responsibilities of the minister as speaker, counselor, leader, and friend.

Sermon & Lecture Preparation I: Structuring a lecture or sermon; knowing the difference; topic selection; techniques of delivery.

Symbols II*: A continued in-depth study of the use of symbols. *Prerequisite: Symbols I*

Associate Minister Certification Requirements

IAOS member, in good standing, for one (1) year

30 Credits (10 Core classes, 10 Medium Missionary classes, 9 required classes, 1 Elective)

Development Classes

Twelve (12) classes with a certified staff development class teacher over a period of three (3) week long seminars. Four (4) classes per seminary with one (1) staff teacher per seminary. Signature of teacher will be required.

Requirement Alternative: Regularly attended at least Twelve (12) classes with a certified staff development class teacher. Signature of teacher will be required.

Student Services One (1) sermon during a weeklong seminary.

Public Worship Services (Sermons & Clairvoyance)

Demonstration at the same service. Six (6) public worship services at a minimum of three (3) different churches. Letter from the church served stating date, work performed, and signed by presiding Minister or board member.

At least One (1) full year of study after Medium Missionary Certification

Ordination Required Classes (O)

Church Business: Instruction on procedures and duties of church management. How to start, organize, and promote the Spiritualist Church. Basic responsibilities and functions of the church.

Ministerial Ethics & Counseling: Explore ethical issues you may face in your ministry and ethical guidance for these issues.

Parliamentary Procedure: Learn how to properly conduct a board meeting, a membership meeting or convention, and follow the Constitution of the church or organization, based on *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.

Preparation for Ministry II*: Extended insights into ministerial expectations and duties. *Prerequisite: Preparation for the Ministry I*

Sacred Writings I: A study of the sacred writings from various religions and religious leaders throughout the centuries.

Sacred Writings II*: A continued and in-depth study of the writings from various religions and religious leaders. *Prerequisite: Sacred Writings I*

Sermon & Lecture Preparation II*: Extended development of the content and delivery of a sermon. **Prerequisite: Sermon & Lecture Preparation I*

Spiritualism in the Bible: An in-depth study of the physical phenomena and mediumship recorded in the Bible.

Ordination Certification Requirements

IAOS member, in good standing, for one (1) year

40 Credits (10 Core classes, 10 Medium Missionary classes, 10 Associate Minister classes, 8 Required classes, 2 Elective classes).

Development Classes

Twelve (12) classes with a certified staff development class teacher over a period of three (3) week long seminaries. Four (4) classes per seminary with one (1) staff teacher per seminary.

Signature of teacher will be required.

Requirement Alternative: Regularly attended at least Twelve (12) classes with a certified staff development class teacher. Signature of teacher will be required.

Student Services One (1) Chairperson during a weeklong seminary

Public Worship Services (Sermon & Clairvoyance)

Demonstration at the same service. Ten (10) public worship services at a minimum of three (3) different churches. Letter from the church served stating date, work performed, signed by presiding Minister or board member.

At least One (1) full year of study after Associate Minister Certification

Appendix C: Questionnaire

A Research Study on Seminary Students Working Toward Ordination as Spiritualist Ministers Conducted by Prof. Todd Jay Leonard

The following questionnaire is designed to find out basic information about current seminary students working toward becoming *ordained* as Spiritualist ministers. This is anonymous, so please be honest and forthright. The data generated by this survey will be presented at academic conferences on religion and eventually published. Your assistance in my fieldwork data is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and assistance with this request.

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS
Mark the appropriate circles which apply to your situation OR enter your responses in the spaces provided

PART 1: Personal Data

1. What is your gender?
 Male Female
2. What is your current age?
 Under 25 25-34 35-44 45-54
 55-64 55-64 65 and over
3. Which best describes your racial or ethnic identity?
 African American Asian Hispanic or Latino
 White or Anglo Other
4. What is your marital status?
 Single (never married) Married Divorced
 Separated Widowed
 Longtime Committed Relationship (not legally married)
5. What is your sexual orientation?
 Straight Gay/Lesbian Bisexual Transgender

6. Do you have children? Yes No
 If yes, indicate the number of each in the blanks provided:
 _____boy(s) _____girl(s) biological adopted

PART 2: Religious/ Spirituality Background

7. Before making the decision to study toward becoming a Spiritualist minister, what was your religious background?
- Lifelong Spiritualist Other

* If you marked "other," please continue to the next question and indicate all that apply to your situation (*i.e.* protestant, Catholic, Baptist, agnostic, New Age, *etc.*). If you had no religion or church affiliation during any of the delineated periods, please mark it accordingly by writing "N/A" [Not Applicable]. Please refer to the example below:

~~~~~

**Example:**

|                                       |                                        |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <b><u>Early Childhood</u></b>         | <b>27-29 Same</b>                      |
| <b>0-5 N/A</b>                        |                                        |
| <b>6-12 Protestant (Methodist)</b>    | <b><u>Middle-Age</u></b>               |
|                                       | <b>30-35 converted to Spiritualism</b> |
| <b><u>Teen Years</u></b>              | <b>36-40 Spiritualism</b>              |
| <b>13-16 Same</b>                     | <b>41-45 Same</b>                      |
| <b>17-19 Agnostic</b>                 | <b>46-49 Same</b>                      |
|                                       | <b>...etc</b>                          |
| <b><u>Young Adulthood</u></b>         |                                        |
| <b>20-23 converted to Catholicism</b> |                                        |
| <b>24-26 Catholic</b>                 |                                        |

~~~~~

7. Please indicate your religious background by "age" below:

<u>Early Childhood</u>		<u>Middle Age</u>
0-5 _____		30-35 _____
6-12 _____		36-40 _____
		41- 45 _____
<u>Teen Years</u>		46-49 _____
13-15 _____		
16-19 _____		
		<u>Senior Years</u>
<u>Young Adulthood</u>		
20-23 _____		50-59 _____
24-26 _____		
27-29 _____		60-69 _____

70-79 _____ 80-89 _____
Over 90 _____

How regularly did you attend church while growing up?

weekly monthly several times a year once a year or less

PART 3: Seminary Studies / Mediumship Development

8. Are you currently a certified medium? Yes No

9. Please mark the certifications you have received from the list below:

Spiritual Healing Year: _____

Medium Missionary Year: _____

Associate Minister Year: _____

Minister (ordination) Year: _____ (expected completion)

10. Please *circle ALL* the courses you have taken (or are taking at the time of completing this survey) from the list below:

Core Classes

(required for all certifications)

Auras

Chakras

Counseling I

Fundamentals

Guides and Guidance

History of Modern Spiritualism

Life After Death

Meditation

Natural Law I

Public Speaking

Medium Missionary

Beginning Bible Study

Counseling II

Intro to the Séance Room

Laws of Mediumship

Public Presentation of Mediumship

Semantics

Spiritual Anatomy

Symbols I

2 Elective Classes

Associate Minister

Basic Unity of Religions

Counseling III

Death and Dying

Natural Law II

New Testament

Old Testament

Preparation for Ministry I

Sermon and Lecture Preparation I

Symbols II

1 Elective Class

Minister (Ordination)

Church Business

Ministerial Ethics and Counseling

Parliamentary Procedure

Preparation for Ministry II

Sacred Writings I

Sacred Writings II
Sermon and Lecture Preparation II

Spiritualism and the Bible
2 Elective Classes

11. From start to finish, how many years of study do you expect it will take before you are ordained as a Spiritualist minister? Years: _____

[If you only plan to study to the level of "Associate Minister" or lower, please indicate the level you plan to attain in the space provided: _____]

12. Do you consider yourself to be a full-time student? Yes No
[Defined as committing the majority of your time to studying toward the ministry rather than working either full-time or part-time.]

If you answered "No" to Question #12, this suggests that you are a "part-time" student. Please indicate if you **work**:

Part-time Full-time Retired Not employed formally
 Other _____

13. Please indicate how many classes a year you are able to complete towards your studies. Number of classes per year: _____

As a part-time student, please indicate the most compelling reason(s) (from the following list) that best describes your decision to pursue your studies in this way:

- Financial reasons
- Time Commitment
- Full-time work (day job)
- Lack of personal commitment/motivation
- Relationship/Familial considerations
- Other (please specify) _____

14. From what age were you aware of your mediumistic gifts? _____

15. What was your first experience with mediumship? _____

16. How do you connect with Spirit on a daily basis? (i.e. prayer, meditation, trance-work, etc.)

17. There is often harsh criticism of Spiritualism by orthodox and mainstream religions; also there are a number of groups who actively try to debunk mediumship as nonsense or creative fakery. How do you personally respond to such criticism?

PART 4: Call to the Ministry

18. Was there a specific time in your life when you first sensed a higher calling that led you to pursue the ministry?

- Yes No Uncertain

If you indicated “No” or “Uncertain” skip to question # 25.

19. At what age did you experience the call (or leading) to the ministry?

- 12 or under 13-18 19-30 Over 30

20. Who was the single most influential person used by Infinite Intelligence, God, the Creator, in this “call” experience? FILL IN ONLY **ONE** RESPONSE:

- Camp staff/instructor member Pastor/Minister Other church staff member
- Development Teacher Seminary Teacher Spiritualist Medium
- Family Member Friend(s) Other (please specify)

Only answer Questions 21a, 22b and 23c if they apply to your selection on Question 20.

21a. If you chose "Pastor/Minister" on Question #20, was the clergy person a parent? Yes No

22b. If you chose "Family Member" on Question #20, was the family member a parent who was a minister? Yes No

23c. If you chose "Spiritualist Medium" on Question #20, was the medium also your development teacher? Yes No

24. Please mark any of the following that were influential in God's calling or leading you into the Spiritualist ministry. FILL IN **ALL** THAT APPLY.

- Visiting a Camp/Church
 - Spiritualist home/parents
 - Counsel of a Spiritualist Minister
 - Attending a message service
 - Attending a séance/healing circle
 - Own mediumship development
 - Development Teacher
 - Receiving a message at church
 - Spirit guide(s)
 - Family member
 - Friend(s)
 - Pastor/Minister
 - Other church staff member
 - Seminary teacher/instructor
 - Other (please specify)
-

24a. To whom did God lead you to for assistance, or who was helpful to you, in clarifying or interpreting this “call” experience? FILL IN **ALL** THAT APPLY.

- Family member
- Spiritualist Minister
- Friends
- Development Teacher
- Other church staff member
- Seminary teacher/instructor
- Non-Spiritualist teacher/professor
- Other (please specify)_____

PART 5: Preparation for the Ministry

25. Was at least one of your parents also a minister?

- Yes No

26. What types of formal education have you attended and/or completed? FILL IN **ALL** THAT APPLY.

<u>Attended</u>	<u>Completed</u>	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	High School Diploma
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	GED (General Education Development)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Vocational or Technical diploma/certificate [Please indicate field of study_____]
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Seminary/Academy diploma/certificate [Other than Spiritualist certification(s): _____]
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Associate Degree [Major:_____]
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Bachelor’s Degree [Major:_____]
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Master’s Degree [Major:_____]

- Doctoral Degree [Major:_____]
- Other(please list)_____

27. Have you completed any degree, diploma or certificate at a religious/spiritual affiliated college or university other than a Spiritualist-based organization?

- Yes
- No

Answer Question #27a only if it applies to your selection on Question #27.

27a. If YES, please list the certifying or granting institution (or association or organization).

28. Based on your personal experiences in preparation for the ministry, what did you experience as the greatest potential barrier(s) to initiating your studies towards becoming a Spiritualist minister? **MARK ALL THAT APPLY.**

- Discouragement from friends
- Discouragement from wife/girlfriend/partner or husband/boyfriend/partner
- Financial obligations at home/lack of finances
- Lack of biblical/sacred text knowledge
- A feeling of unworthiness to pursue a career as a minister or clergy
- Lack of counseling, guidance, or mentoring
- Lack of knowledge about the work a minister does
- Lack of confidence in your mediumship abilities
- Low salary of ministers
- Parental objection
- Fear of giving sermons/messages in a church setting
- Other(s) (please specify)_____

29. At any time during the process in working towards becoming a Spiritualist minister have you been formally mentored by a development teacher, minister, counselor, or any other person qualified to assist you in becoming more knowledgeable about the vocation and/or how best to achieve success in the pastorate?

- Yes No

If YES, what was the mentor's relationship to you (*i.e.* teacher, pastor, *etc.*)?

In addition, what assistance is the most appreciated by you as a student of the ministry that has helped you to achieve success?

32. What is the **single factor** (among these) that is the most important to you in successfully working towards certification and training in the ministry? **CHOOSE ONLY ONE.**

- Depth of knowledge/competent instructors
- Encouragement by others (family, friends, *etc.*)
- Formal mentoring, tutoring, mediumship development
- Internships or student service practicum in area churches
- Private Bible/Sacred Text study and prayer
- Meditation
- Guidance from personal spirit guides
- Communicating with those on the other side of the veil
- Prayer
- Financial assistance
- Personal discipline and dedication

PART 6: Future Tenure as a Spiritualist Minister

33. Do you plan derive the bulk of your livelihood from the ministry?

- Yes No

If NO, how do you plan to serve in the Spiritualist ministry? (*i.e.* as a visiting pastor, as one of several clergy that serve a church/congregation, *etc.*) Please explain:

34. Do you serve as a student in a church(es) currently? Yes No

[i.e. Do you serve formally by giving sermons and/or messages in Spiritualist church services as part of your ministerial training?]

If YES, please answer the following questions:

35. How often do you participate in these activities? ____ times per year

36. How personally satisfied and/or content are you in your current role as a student in working towards becoming a Spiritualist Minister?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

Please explain your answer in more detail:

PART 7: Family Background

38. How would you describe you or your family's social class?

- Upper/upper-middle class
- Middle/lower-middle class
- Lower/working class

39. Where did you primarily grow up?

- Urban area/large city or suburb
- Smaller city or town
- Rural area or rural village

40. How would you describe your family while growing up?

- Extended (large, including parents, grandparents and others)
- Nuclear (smaller, detached from extended family—parents and siblings)
- Modern (small, single-parent—divorced or unmarried, cohabitative, alternative lifestyle)

41. How would you describe your household while growing up?

- Maternalistic (mother or other female recognized as home leader)
- Paternalistic (father or other male figure recognized as house leader)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE WITH THIS SURVEY.

Intolerant Impiety in Illusions Insufficient: Individuality, Ideology, Invention, Imagination, Illation, and Imitation in the Interregnum of the "I"

Jon K. Loessin
Wharton County Junior College

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee. Neither can we call this a begging of misery, or a borrowing of misery, as though we were not miserable enough of ourselves, but must fetch in more from the next house, in taking upon us the misery of our neighbours.¹
—John Donne, *Meditation XVII*

Introduction

Generically, religion is defined as “a cause, principle, or system of beliefs held to with ardor and faith.”² In this era of postmodernism, the fragmentation of traditional values and beliefs (including conventional religious denominations) has resulted in a plethora of pseudoreligions, each with their ardent devotees. What constitutes “the religious” in the postmodern era certainly departs from the well-studied and documented forms of traditional faiths (usually in the forms of organized churches and denominations) but do the principles, theories, and rules discovered throughout the sociological examination of religion also hold for these new forms of “pseudoreligious experience”? Generally, the answer appears to be “yes” and if indeed that is true, there must also exist a pattern through which postmodern pseudoreligious forms evolve and become viable, even powerful movements based on the veneration of objects or entities of a superhuman presence and ones that influence greatly the behavior of their adherents.

Classical Sociological Theory on Religion

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) claimed that religion was nothing more than a primitive form of sociology and that no society could exist without “religious forms of sentiment and action.”³ He also posited that every society labels and distinguishes objects as “sacred” and “profane”. Thus, Durkheim came to the conclusion that religion could be defined as a “system of faiths and practices related to things sacred...uniting all their adherents in a single community, known as a Church.”⁴

Durkheim also postulated that religion in society provided four primary functions to followers: 1) discipline; 2) cohesion; 3) vitality; and 4) euphoria. Each of these functions serves as a necessary dimension to social life and contributes to the psychological well-being of followers. Cohesion (or unity, or belonging) was so important to individuals that it could even prevent suicide (as discussed in Durkheim’s classical study of *Suicide* [1897]). In fact, social unity (whether centered around family, God, or a cause, or even misery [e.g. “We’re all in this together...”]) is essential to all people becoming well-adjusted, functioning

¹ Donne, John. *Meditation XVII*, 1607.

²“Religion.” *Webster’s New College Dictionary*. 1977 Edition.

³ Cuzzort, R. P and E. W. King. *20th Century Social Thought*. New York: Holt-Rinehart, 1980. p. 57.

⁴ Halbwachs, Maurice. *Sources of Religious Sentiment*. New York: Free Press, 1962. p. 23.

beings due to the sense of meaning, purpose, and belonging it creates. In short, social isolation increased individual instability.

Max Weber⁵ (1864-1920), in his study of *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism* (1910) not only discovered that the evolution of religious belief influenced the development of economic systems, but that people who took their religious doctrines seriously would experience a change in their behavior and “secular” beliefs. This conclusion by Weber indicated that there are no truly secular dimensions in society as all are influenced by religious principles (a notion in concert with Durkheim’s discussion of “sacred” and “profane” objects, whereby profane objects can take on “sacred” meanings under certain conditions). If the development of capitalism as an economic system had its origins in the Protestant value system of the Reformation, are all economic systems religious in origin? If they are, are all political systems and for that matter, social movements religious in origin?

After all, Auguste Comte⁶ (1783-1857) the so-titled “father of sociology” in his effort to reconcile the differences between religion and science, proclaimed that traditional theology had been just one stage in an evolutionary process toward the establishment of a “religion of humanity” (which he called everything from “social physics” to “positivism” to “sociology”), citing that early humans had first practiced “fetishism” (the worship of special objects and magical rituals), then polytheism (multiple gods), then monotheism (one God). After science emerged to dispel more and more of the mysteries of faith, science itself became the pseudoreligious object of veneration, progressing through the same process that theology had, except this time, through the stages of metaphysics (the earthly causes of phenomena), the polyscientific (the multiple sciences of Comte’s day), and finally the establishment of a monoscientific “religion of humanity” called sociology (of which Comte would envision himself at first, “high priest,” then “pope,” and eventually as the Messiah). His theory, known as the Law of Human Progress, was little more than the path toward humanity worshipping itself and differed little from utopian socialism. Even Karl Marx⁷ (1818-1883) as part of his “Theory of Dialectical Materialism” set forth the notion that the entire institution of religious faith (including belief in supernatural powers and notions of an afterlife) had been concocted by the bourgeois classes throughout history to stifle, silence, and relegate the working classes to a position of permanence in their caste. “Religion is the opiate of the people” according to Marx, and until the proletariat collectively recognizes this and atheism becomes the norm for the exploited labor class, the new savior and object of worship, the State, will not be able to change society to the desired (and eventually ideal) state of classlessness, again in the form of Marxist socialism.

The idea that as traditional forms of religious faith dissipate, the state (or some other organization) will replace them and provide the comfort and unity for willing participants members is not unlike what can be gleaned from Durkheim in his study of *Suicide* or even the postmodern sociologist Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007). When social structures and traditional forms of comfort, security, and unity (e.g. the family, the church) become less stable, weak, or nonexistent, individuals are faced with two alternatives in what has become an “anomic” condition: seek new refuges that provide a semblance of structure, comfort, security, and unity or remain disconnected and directionless in a world growing more complex and unsure with each passing day.

⁵ Cuzzort, *op cit*, p. 78-81

⁶ Ashley, David and David Michael Orenstein. *Sociological Theory: Classical Statements*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 2001. p. 55-61.

⁷ Pampel, Fred C. *Sociological Lives and Ideas: An Introduction to Classical Theorists*. New York: Worth. p. 32.

Postmodern Implications

The postmodern world is characterized by a) incessant choosing; b) increasing individuality; and c) uncertainty and insecurity.⁸ The signs of an actual postmodern age have been a rather recent development which most social scientists agree have occurred since the rapid expansion of the new media and technology to deliver it. What Baudrillard spoke of in the 1960's and 70's as emerging certainly seems to have now emerged in the new millennium and with it, a host of social changes.

When individuals are offered a multitude of choices, whether those choices be of styles, products, brands, faiths, ideas, values, or anything else, the mere act of making a decision is in itself anomic and raises self-doubt and insecurity. Expanding individuality (and individual choice) is also responsible for the increased isolation of members of society and foments "seekership" toward social inclusion (borrowing a term from John Lofland's and Rodney Stark's "Theory of Religious Conversion"⁹). With choice comes uncertainty and with choice and individuality comes insecurity. As a result, the postmodern world is ripe for social movements, identity politics, and pseudoreligions.

As Baudrillard states:

...our "modern" civilizations have existed on a base of expansion and explosion at all levels under the sign of universalized commerce, of economic and philosophical investments, under the sign of universal law and conquest.

...[T]hey have known how to survive, for a time at least, on a *controlled explosion*, on a liberation of subdued and progressive energy, and this was the golden age of their culture. But, according to the process of boom and acceleration, this explosive process has become uncontrollable. It has acquired a fatal speed or amplitude... Implosion is inevitable, and... nothing will halt the implosive new process... and traces... of various attempts to control new impulses which are antiuniversalist, antirepresentative, tribal, centripetal... communes, ecology, ZPG, drugs—all of these undoubtedly belong to this order.¹⁰

...The era of the political was one of *anomie*: crisis, violence, madness, and revolution. The era of the transpolitical is that of anomaly: an aberration of no consequence, contemporaneous with the event of no consequence... The transpolitical is also this: the passage from growth to excrescence, from finality to hypertely, from organic equilibria to cancerous metastases. This is the site of a catastrophe and no longer a crisis... which drag[s] us ever further away from any reality, any history, any destiny.¹¹

Is it any wonder postmodern individuals who no longer accept or subscribe to traditional religious values and practices often resort to battling catastrophic causes in collective effort, even with an extreme pseudoreligious fervor? Such collective efforts often include the condemnation or discrediting of others who hold different political or religious (even pseudoreligious) views.

⁸ *Understanding Sociology: From Modernity to Post-Modernity*. DVD. New York: Insight Media, 1999.

⁹ Lofland, John and Rodney Stark. "Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective". *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 30, No. 6 (Dec. 1965). pp. 862-875.

¹⁰ Baudrillard, Jean. *In the Shadows of the Silent Majorities*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007. p. 74.

¹¹ Baudrillard, Jean. *Fatal Strategies*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008. p. 46.

The Theory of Pseudoreligious Conversion and Practice

Similar in scope to Lofland's and Stark's "Theory of Religious Conversion" adapted from their seminal 1965 article, "Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective", the following process has been developed to apply to postmodern pseudoreligious movements. Lofland's and Stark's value-added process posited that potential converts to cult movements were individuals who: 1) experienced a problem in life; 2) held a religious problem-solving perspective; 3) engaged in seekership toward a new faith; 4) experienced a turning point regarding their problem; 5) the establishment of cult-affective bonds; 6) the elimination of extra-cult affective bonds; and 7) individual intensive interaction resulted (including recruiting others). The postmodern equivalent to Lofland and Stark tailored to pseudoreligious movements and affiliations might transpire as follows:

1. Individuality—The postmodern social standard of individualism creates isolationism, insecurity, and uncertainty (a form of Durkheim's [and Baudrillard's] *anomie* (normlessness) resulting in a majority of affected persons to seek structure, comfort, security, and unity through any available means.
2. Ideology—Due to the political, economic, and religious (or anti-religious) ideologies possessed by individuals in postmodern society, each is drawn toward that with which they feel familiar and comfortable. Some will seek traditional forms of religious faith, but others will seek political, economic, or secular movements in which they can participate as a collective body.
3. Invention—Once individuals began participating in non-traditional or secular movements, and since such movements are usually issue-oriented (or crisis-oriented), they or the inventive (and sometimes charismatic) leaders in the movements (referred to by Baudrillard as "idiot savants"¹²) develop ideas that are transmitted to the faithful in the form of sensationalism or propaganda that often overemphasize the scope and seriousness of the movement's challenge or goal with the intent of escalating fervor and support of the enthusiasts within the movement.
4. Imagination—Since such movements are solution-oriented (to issues or crises), the imagination is employed to envision solutions to the problems faced. (A good example of this technique is found on bumper-stickers of anti-war activists which sport the phrase "Imagine World Peace".) These are usually insufficient illusions of the possible or of reality.
5. Illation—The belief system permeating the movement along with its potential solutions morph into a collective universal truth—a set of ideas, realities, rules, principles, and solutions that emerge as the sole belief system of the movement and its participants. (*Illation* is defined as the process of inferring truth from premises, whether by logic or assumption.) An excellent example of the process of illation at work is each time an presumed authority on "global warming" states that "the time for debate is over" even though significant amounts of evidence exists to the contrary.
6. Imitation—Devoted to the cause at hand, adherents see universal truth in their ideas and actions. They begin to become worshippers of the object or principle they elevate to singular importance and the movement develops into a pseudofaith

¹² Baudrillard, Jean. *Radical Alterity*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008. p. 103.

(pseudoreligion) mimicking many of the same characteristics as those of traditional religion. (An example might be Christians celebrating Christmas while environmentalists celebrate Earth Day or the Solstice.) This imitation results in the final stage of intolerant impiety.

7. Intolerant Impiety—Once pseudoreligious (and thus impious) movements form, the process of intolerance toward other beliefs begins as a promotion to the new pseudoreligious cause. (One common example of this is any movement objecting to religious speech or practice in public citing freedom of speech and thought concerns. Truly free speech is thus suppressed in an attempt to promote free speech and freedom of ideas—a typical postmodernist paradox.)

This theoretical process, occurring in post-modern societies governed by the spirit of apparent individualism, witnesses the decline and fragmentation of traditional religious beliefs and practices. This reevaluation of values leaves a void for tradition, community, and something in which to believe for those who are declared (or willing, or unobjecting) post-modernists. As a result, the postmodern individual adopts a secular (or deviant, or alternative) ideology, follows its inventions (read, crises), use their imaginations to imagine solutions (e.g. imagine world peace, no pollution, etc.), adopts false reasoning and logic toward solving the social ills, unites with others participating in the same efforts and imitates them and the leaders of the movements, and as individuals, morph into a secular collective that sees "old style" traditional religious faith as outdated to the point of denying those of tradition their chosen belief systems and values (e.g. "Freedom of religion means freedom FROM religion.) In their intolerance, they adopt a false faith based on Illusion and deny freedom to those who do not think as they (e.g. witness the group who seeks to eliminate all humans from the planet to solve the climate crisis¹³ or PETA, whose most radical members are willing to promote animal rights above human rights¹⁴).

The Final Word

The final word on this theory of postmodern pseudoreligious conversion appropriately comes from Baudrillard. While postmodernism has been described as the era of the "I" (as in Individualism), a Baudrillardian analysis offers a different insight. Consider the postmodern environmental movement when reading these lines from Baudrillard:

We must not reconcile ourselves with nature.
It seems that the more the human race reconciles itself with nature, the less it is reconciled with itself...there is a violence specific to the human race in general, a violence of the species against itself in which it treats itself as a residue, as a survivor—even in the present—of a coming catastrophe. As if it

¹³ The Voluntary Human Extinction Movement (VHEMT) says humans need to stop breeding and voluntarily progress our own slow demise in order that plants, animals and fragile ecosystems can survive. Their website explains their commitment to a long term goal of convincing the population of Earth that it has no future.

¹⁴ People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has been described as "by far the most successful radical organization in America." PETA seeks "total animal liberation," according to its president and co-founder, Ingrid Newkirk. That means no meat or dairy, of course; but it also means no aquariums, no circuses, no hunting or fishing, no fur or leather, and no medical research using animals. PETA is even opposed to the use of seeing-eye dogs.

too were ready to repent of an evolution which has brought it such privileges and carried it to such extremes...

It is quite possible that, in this process, the species itself is commencing its own disappearance, either by disenchantment with—or *ressentiment* towards—itself...

Man is without prejudice: he is using himself as a guinea-pig just as he is using the rest of the world...

He is sacrificing himself, as a species, to an *unknown experimental fate*...

...[T]his experimental fate to which the human species is condemning itself by unprecedented, artificial means, this scientific prefiguring of its own disappearance, sweeps away all ideas of a self-preservation instinct. ...[T]his disappearance...of thought signals that, beneath a frenzy for ecological conservation which is really more to do with nostalgia and remorse, a wholly different tendency has already won out, the sacrificing of the species to boundless experimentation.

The human species is domesticating itself, this time for good...It is submitting collectively to the same rituals as insects. Soon it will submit to the same controlled techniques of reproduction as the protozoa...It no longer, in fact, sees itself as different from others, in spite of its supremacy. It treats itself as a species that may be ruthlessly exploited, condemned to brutalization, and an annihilation of its own...¹⁵

Lofland and Stark may not have envisioned postmodernism in its current form or the pseudoreligious movements that would evolve, but their insight is uncannily accurate—“Becoming a World Saver”. While it has long been said that “No man is an island”, Donne’s meditation also continues that in seeking the solution to social ills, we “must fetch in more from the next house, in taking upon us the misery of our neighbors.”¹⁶ Human beings crave unity, faith, and purpose, even in an age of individuality—and always have. The only thing is that true to the dualistic nature of postmodern thought, one person’s world saver is another’s world destroyer and in the “interregnum of the ‘I’” (the mantra of postmodern individualism), society tends to be more collective than ever, albeit in non-traditional forms. So, perhaps the progressive era of the postmodern with its incessant choices, individualism, insecurities, and instabilities may be nothing special after all. In fact, it may turn out to be the most controlling, collective, and destructive epoch of human history—and perhaps its last.

Biographical Note

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¹⁵ Baudrillard, Jean. *The Illusion of the End*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992. pp.82-85.

¹⁶ Donne, op cit.

Resurgent Calvinism among Young Conservative Christian Leaders and Its Implications for Women in Ministry

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Abstract

Several recent studies have indicated a growing interest in and adoption of Calvinistic beliefs by young Christian leaders. This paper presents findings from a national survey (conducted in 2007) of more than 2,600 Christians studying for ministry-related vocations. Not only does the survey document a growing adoption of Reformed theology by conservative Baptist and Nondenominational ministry students, but the data also demonstrates a strong correlation between this recent manifestation of Calvinism and restrictions placed on the leadership roles of women within the church. Conversely, the Christian ministry students that are conservative but hold Arminian beliefs tend to allow greater freedom for female ministerial leadership. One of the attractions of Calvinism seems to be its suitability as a theological mechanism for control, including a measure of control over women.

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The Existential Situation and the Emergence of Evil

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Introduction

It might safely be said that in modern times the concepts of bad and evil are widely held notions within religious culture and society, the infractions of which are thought to be innately and immediately known. For example, if someone breaks into my house and steals from me, I quickly come to the certain conclusion it is bad and feel it is an evil done to me. But with an in-depth study about evil, coming to a certainty as to its meaning and origin, and its place in history and culture, seems to be a bit more illusory. Many questions come to mind, which complicates a clear answer as to what it is and how it is.

Is the difference between bad and evil a matter of degree? Does evil find its realization within the individual or is it a socially influenced phenomenon? While many cultures have organized themselves with oral and written laws around an idea of what is bad, why is behavior found acceptable to some reviled by others?

Other pertinent questions might be, have all past cultures delineated ideas about bad and evil and does that necessarily stand in contrast with concepts about good? In relation to that, how then did evil become personified to stand out and in contrast to a person or persons considered wholly good?

While our exegesis here cannot exhaustively answer all the questions mentioned, with a social scientific approach and as an addendum to the ongoing application of existential anthropology to behavior within the context of culture, the following study will seek to establish a general definition of evil and find the circumstances, at a primary level, for its origin and personification.

The Relativity of Evil

One of the outstanding contradictions of human nature resides not so much in the notion of evil itself, but in the definition given it when it is perceived to have been perpetrated on oneself, one's clan, one's tribe, one's people, or one's nation, when there is a proclivity to do the same to others. The definition of evil thus becomes narrowly relative to this perception even though the means of perpetration are the same.

So while the Spanish in the 1500s were horrified at the practice of human sacrifice, they themselves were quite brutal toward those they conquered. Though Africans in the seventeenth century were enslaved by non-African peoples, before European incursion some Africans enslaved other Africans, as did some North American Indians enslave other Indians. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Turkish Muslims slaughtered Christian Albanians.

So with just this amount of history brought to light, combined with the full knowledge of the crimes committed by Hitler during World War II and Pol Pot in Cambodia, one would assume it would universally be agreed the acts of slavery and genocide are evil and on their way out. But when it comes to slavery, we see the modern face of it in the form of child labor, forced prostitution, and human trafficking. As to genocide, as recently as the 1990s, we saw the attempt at ethnic cleansing by Serbian Christians on Albanian Muslims. In 1994 we witnessed the Rwandan Genocide with the mass killing of Tutsis tribesmen by Hutu militia, and today in the region of Darfur Arab militias are killing non-Arab African civilians on a mass scale.

No doubt in these and other like instances, those on whom the atrocity occurs consider it an evil act, but those committing the atrocity, by their actions, showing zeal and purpose, justifying it with religious and political premise, either do not consider it evil or they consider it necessary. Lance Morrow portrays a similar conundrum:

The retributive function of justice, exercised in the name of outraged society overrides the prohibition against killing, even though that prohibition comes with nothing less than the warrant of Sinai. So, war makes evil permissible. So, at its worst, does religion, which, like war, has its rationale of righteousness and grants itself moral indulgences. So does cultural and social and political fashion. . . . What is the law then? That the atrocious act committed in retaliation for great evil is permissible and therefore, somehow, not evil? If you initiate the evil, you are evil; but if you reply to evil with more evil, then that retaliation is not evil, but something else?¹

So then is evil only a received condition? Yet for evil to be received, an act of perpetration is required. The relativity in this situation occurs because the same means by which evil is defined, namely violence, when received is considered evil, but when applied is justified. Therefore, it seems there is no ground of agreement on definition, though the means and the act are the same.

Another relativizing feature concerning the idea of evil is its use as political leverage against another's opposing ideology accompanied with false polemic. A few examples would be the Roman persecution on early Christians who were accused of cannibalism and sexual orgies because of their communion ritual and love feasts. In the late 1100s and early 1200s, along with the Waldensians, who were accused of heresy because of their refusal to recognize the priesthood or to venerate saints and martyrs, the Roman Catholic Church persecuted the Cathars for their belief in an evil god who created the material world. In 1171 in Blois, France, 33 Jews were burned at the stake on the accusation that because they were born of the devil they drank human blood to maintain human appearances. In 1307 and 1312 King Phillip IV of France and Pope Clement V, with accusations of sodomy and heresy, moved against the Knights Templar, persecuted and killed some of their leaders, and dissolved the order. In 1430 Joan of Arc, accused of witchcraft, was burned at the stake.

Today we see the use of the term evil for political leverage with the description of Russia as an evil empire and the portraying of North Korea, Iran, and Iraq as the axis of evil. Such overarching depictions, of course, distort what approximations we have about reality. Are all Russian or North Koreans evil? Are the leaders of the side being called evil really evil or do they act with a sense of self-preservation? In the end it is such use or misuse of the word that has some wanting its complete disuse.

Even though some acts will find less of a consensus as to whether they are evil or just bad, an act considered not bad by most, but carried to an extreme, could be considered bad by most and evil by some. Whereas a bad act taken to a level of drawn-out infliction accompanied with commensurate satisfaction or a bad act committed on a mass scale will, with greater consensus, be considered evil. Thus the act of drinking alcohol or playing cards by themselves are considered not bad by most, bad by some, and evil by a few, but when taken to an extreme, would be considered bad by most and evil by some. In the case of negligent killing or manslaughter, this is considered bad, but not evil, and carries with it a penalty. But serial killing, mass killing, or killing involving torture is, with the greatest consensus, considered evil. Thus it is the **act** of evil that is more easily agreed on and even

¹ Lance Morrow, *Evil: An Investigation* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 150-151.

though an act has a degree of relativity as to whether it is considered evil or not, typifying an individual as such is illusory because individuals who commit horrific acts often have endearing qualities to their personality. As Barbara Oakley points out,

But if the dark shades of the successfully sinister are sometimes evil it is important to understand that evil is complex. The dictionary definition of evil, after all, is "Morally bad or wrong; wicked; *an evil tyrant*." That definition implies a gestalt sense of evil--not evil in every particular. Shades of gray lurk, sometimes darker, sometimes lighter. And the occasionally genuinely decent act from a successfully sinister person can't help but confuse our gut feeling that someone like Hitler must be totally evil. People often don't understand that deeply dysfunctional, even unquestionably evil individuals can have genuinely decent aspects to their personality.²

The subjective nature of evil is also a relativizing feature to the concept of evil. After all, a course of action taken which is considered bad or evil comes from within the mind. C. G. Jung, as he was influenced by Nietzsche's existential philosophy, portrayed personal and collective evil as a shadow of the self. His thought summarized by Frey-Rohn was that social influence from without the self cannot be made to blame for an individual's bad or evil actions. Behavior becomes evil when the individual takes society's directives for what is good and bad as absolutes and ignores his other impulses. Ultimately, the individual is responsible for deciding what is right or wrong or good and evil.³

To a degree Jung and Frey-Rohn are correct, especially when it comes to the realization of evil. Yet external influences cannot be ignored. Again, the situation is relative. It seems when it comes to bad behavior, external influences are greater. When it comes to evil, social disapproval is specific. The influence to smoke and drink are gray areas as to social influence, though considered bad or evil by some and when taken to a degree of addiction, are considered bad by most. But maiming and killing for pure pleasure is an act pathological and contrary to social morays with universal agreement as to its evil nature.

Thus with even a precursory investigation, the complexities about the nature of evil quickly comes to light because of its relativity as to definition, its subjective nature, and because of its use as political tool. But to desire its non-use or elimination from the human lexicon would be just that, a desire and an impossible task. In answer to the thought that because of its subjectivity and relativity it might not exist in a real and material sense, it first has its existence as a concept, therefore the idea of it is a perceptual reality. But more importantly it serves the social function of discerning itself from the normal and the bad and does, when its definition has been realized, become a material reality as social dysfunction, with real and pernicious consequence.

Defining Evil

As we see much has been said about the subjectivity and relativity of evil and as an assumed known much has been dedicated to its place in history. A few notable endeavors on the personification of evil would be Neal Forsyth's *The Old Enemy*, revealing the literary

² Barbara Oakley, *Evil Genes: Why Rome Fell, Hitler Rose, Enron Failed, and My Sister Stole My Mother's Boyfriend* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2007), 321-322.

³ Liliane Frey-Rohn, "Evil from the Psychological Point of View," in *Evil*, Studies in Jungian Thought Series (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1967), 153.

and cultural history of Satan;⁴ Jeffrey Burton Russell's *The Devil*, which shows the parallels between Satan and the Egyptian god Set and the Zoroastrian power, Ahriman;⁵ Elaine Pagel's *Origin of Satan*, which reveals the social history of the notion of Satan within the Christian community and its use as political tool;⁶ and Paul Carus' comprehensive work *The History of the Devil and the Idea of Evil*.⁷

But for the very reason of its relativity and complexity, in looking for a suitable definition as to what exactly evil is, we find a scarcity and variance of explanation.

Carus defines evil personified as,

The embodiment of everything unpleasant, then of everything bad, evil, and immoral. He is hatred, destruction, and annihilation incarnate, and as such he is the adversary of existence, of the Creator, of God. The devil is the rebel of the cosmos, the independent in the empire of a tyrant, the opposition to uniformity, the dissonance in universal harmony.⁸

Freud claimed the personification of evil started with the projection of primary people's own hostilities toward the dead; in turn, the dead could cause mischief for the living because of their own resentment for being robbed of life.⁹

The social evolutionist Herbert Spencer, in his belief humans are evolving toward moral perfection, saw evil as an imperfection, unsuited to social conditions, which would eventually fall out of favor and into disuse.

All evil results from the non-adaptation of constitution to conditions. . . . All imperfection is unfitness to the conditions of existence. . . . This unfitness must consist either in having a faculty of faculties in excess; or in having a faculty of faculties deficient; or in both. A faculty in excess is one which the conditions of existence do not afford full exercise to; and a faculty that is deficient, is one from which the conditions of existence demand more than it can afford. . . . Finally all excess and all deficiency must disappear; that is, all unfitness must disappear; that is, all imperfection must disappear.¹⁰

Conversely, echoing Irenaeus's idea centuries earlier about the blessedness of the fall of man, for without it Christ's redemption could not occur, Jung saw evil as an essential part of the human psyche, a shadow side of the self without which self-actualization could not occur. The exercise of self-will only comes to fruition as an independent reality with an aptitude for evil incapable of ethical decisions without it.¹¹ As Jung saw it, evil and good are interdependent co-existences which helps create a complex whole without which good could not find its character in the thought and actions of the human person. In contrast while

⁴ Neal Forsyth, *The Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat Myth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

⁵ Jeffrey B. Russell, *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1970).

⁶ Elaine Pagels, *The Origin of Satan* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996).

⁷ Paul Carus, *The History of the Devil and the Idea of Evil* (New York, New York: Bell Publishing Company).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 482.

⁹ Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (New York, New York: W. W. Norton, 1950), 76-78.

¹⁰ Herbert Spencer, *On Social Evolution* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 8-12.

¹¹ C. G. Jung, CW 11, *Psychology and Religion*, "A Psychological Approach to the Trinity," par. 290. (New York, New York: Pantheon Books, second printing, 1963). Found in John A. Sanford, *Evil: The Shadow Side of Reality* (New York, New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1990), 150-151.

some early Christian thinkers saw the necessary part evil plays for humans to become good, through the concept of *privatio boni*, as formulated by Origen, evil was seen as a dependency and a nothing without good, otherwise evil and good would be on equal footing, a dualistic theology monotheism could not tolerate.

In the search for a definition of evil, another issue which needs addressed is its occasional connection to randomness. We have seen in the modern era the mindless action of “random shootings,” and just as pernicious, those who have killed for pleasure have often chosen their victims “at random.” Even the random elements of weather and disease, when they hit in a devastating way, have some wanting to draw a connection to bad behavior. The black plague in the past and HIV in modern times are examples. But can the aspect of randomness be included as part of the character of evil? This again shows the relativity to the nature of evil. Not only does there seem to be a variety of explanation, even when it is agreed the definition of evil is realized, when it stands in contrast to the good, theological conundrums surfaces.

But even though there is a high degree of relativity to the concept of evil, I do not believe it reaches a point which defies description, especially and importantly when it comes to social function. One thing that evil does is to make clear that which is good. I am sure those who have been held by terrorists, when released, gained a new outlook and appreciation for freedom and life. Those who survive any harrowing experience, a plane crash, a storm at sea, a hurricane, or tornado, though it may not have reached a level seen as evil, such an experience would certainly have been viewed as bad and after survival puts the good things about life in a new light of appreciation.

At the social level the idea of evil helps put in order the experiences of life. It not only helps to define and make clear that which is considered good but it helps to define and delineate that which is bad. It is bad if I stub my toe, but that is not evil. It is bad if I get angry and yell at someone, but it is not evil unless I become consumed by anger, then it might be. If someone is killed by accident, that may not be evil, but to a loved one it certainly might feel so. The point is evil is a degree of behavior or action that reaches a level of definition which clarifies that which is good and exceeds that which is considered bad and though there might be some uncertainty as to whether some things are evil or just bad--an essential, reflective, individual and social response in itself--some things do reach a level of certainty and general agreement that they are not just bad, but indeed evil.

At the individual level, which has its social implications, an evil act is a conscious act which seeks to destroy another person’s mental or physical well-being for the purpose of contract or satisfaction.¹² An evil person is one who does this without remorse and with intent on doing it again. All societies to some degree will organize themselves to ensure the pursuit of material comfort which “evil” behavior opposes; therefore, evil at the social level will find its definition by its dysfunction to social interaction and organization of a particular society or culture. Thus, for example, when it comes to killing, even though there have been societies which have glorified the warrior and killing when at war, killing another member within the society to which one belongs is necessarily regulated.

Though senseless murder is clearly understood to be an evil, evil comes in various form, all illegal. But evil acts could be performed with less chance of legal consequence in the form of gossip, or machinations to hurt someone financially, mentally, or socially, either because of jealousy or for sheer pleasure or for self-promotion. Thus evil not only clarifies the good and helps delineate the bad, it can, because of its place, move behavior toward the good through discussion about what is bad and what is evil and when bad becomes evil.

¹² To satisfy feelings of hostility as with the UnaBomber, Theodore Kaczynski or the Oklahoma City bomber, Timothy McVeigh or for the sheer purpose of pleasure like the BTK murderer Dennis Rader or Ted Bundy.

Evil at the Primary Level

It might be thought the dualistic idea of good and evil, heaven and hell, and the personification of evil in the form of a single powerful entity would be reserved to Persian, Jewish, Christian, or Islamic thought, and when it comes to a more complete polarity through a perceived conflict, this may be the case. As Helen Roundtree says of the Powhatans,

The Powhatans did not believe in separate afterlives for the good and the wicked, and were confused by "leading" English questions about such things. . . . They apparently felt that Okeus (the god who policed people's behavior) punished the wicked sufficiently in this world. It was only late in the seventeenth century that reports were heard of a Powhatan version of heaven and hell.¹³

Yet early contacts with the Powhatans reported a belief in a pleasant after-life for people of status only. There they found peace and quiet, pleasant fields and pastures, and staples and food in plenty. On the other hand with less specificity the souls of the wicked hung somewhere between heaven and earth.¹⁴

Codrington's observances of the Western Pacific Melanesians indicate, though there may have been no concept about wholly evil beings, they do distinguish between super-natural spirits, who are smarter and stronger than humans, are not physical, but have human like form, and ghosts who are human spirits who have left the body after death. It appears for the most part it is the ghosts which cause serious mischief in the form of sickness or possession causing insanity. Yet in Malanta there is a belief in the *urehi* "who are not living men, nor the ghosts of dead men, that haunt big trees in the forest and snatch away the souls of men."¹⁵

As related by Lubbock, some primary peoples had a clearer concept of evil spirits than of benevolent deities. According to Thunberg, the Khoikhoi of South Africa feared an evil spirit to whom they attributed sickness, thunder, death, and every calamity. The Bechuanas attribute all evil to an invisible god called Murimo. The Coroados of Brazil acknowledge no cause of good, but only an evil principal which leads astray, causes confusion, danger, and death. Some Zemis of the West Indian Islands might have caused calamity.¹⁶ In New Zealand each disease was caused by a particular god, thus the deity Tonga caused headaches and sickness; Moko-Tiki, a lizard god, was the source of pains in the chest; Tu-tangata-kino caused stomach aches; Titi-hai occasioned pains in the feet and ankles; Rongomai and Tuparitapu were the gods of consumption.¹⁷

¹³ Helen C. Roundtree, *The Powhatan Indians of Virginia* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1944), 39, 139.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹⁵ R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians: Studies in Their Anthropology and Folk-lore* (New Haven, Connecticut: Hraf Press, 1957), 120-124, 218-227.

¹⁶ Tylor mentions the *ceimi* of the West Indians as "beings which require special definition to show whether they are human souls or demons or deities." (Edward Burnett Tylor, *Religion in Primitive Culture* (New York, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958) Vol 2, 196). I am not sure if it is yet known if any one Zemi could be designated to cause mischief or if some might only bless. Certainly some of the Zemis are presently identified as deities who help are curiously sculpted to appear quite menacing. See Irving Rouse, *The Tainos: Rise and Decline of the People Who Greeted Columbus* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1992), 118, 120.

¹⁷ John Lubbock, *The Origin of Civilization and the Primitive Condition of Man* (New York; New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1872), 129-131.

According to Tylor the most common source of evil realized in personified form would be dead ancestors who cause trouble.

Thus the Australians have been known to consider the ghosts of unburied dead as becoming malignant demons. New Zealanders have supposed the souls of their dead to become so changed in nature as to be malignant to their nearest and dearest friends in life; the Caribs said that, of man's various souls, some go to the seashore and capsize boats, others to the forest to be evil spirits; among the Sioux Indians the fear of a ghost's vengeance has been found to act as a check on murder; of some tribes in Central Africa it may be said that their main religious doctrine is the belief in ghosts, and that the main characteristic of these ghosts is to do harm to the living. The Patagonians lived in terror of the souls of their wizards, which become evil demons after death; Turanian tribes of North Asia fear their shamans even more when dead than when alive, for they become a special class of spirits who are the hurtfullest in all nature, and who among the Mongols plague the living on purpose to make them bring offerings. In China it is held that the multitude of wretched destitute spirits in the world below, such souls of lepers and beggars, can sorely annoy the living; therefore at certain times they are to be appeased with offerings of food, scant and beggarly; and a man who feels unwell, or fears a mishap in business, will prudently have some mock-clothing and mock-money burnt for these 'gentlemen of the lower India; whole orders of demons there were formerly human souls, especially of people left unburied or slain by plague or violence, of bachelors or of women who died in childbirth, and who henceforth wreak their vengeance on the living. They may, however, be propitiated by temples and offerings, and thus become in fact a regular class of deities.¹⁸

Hultkrantz also confirms that with the Native Americans, "the deceased may be demoniacal."¹⁹

Tylor also mentions disease-causing evil principals in what he calls "the world-wide doctrine of disease-demons" and gives evidence of demon possession throughout Africa, in Patagonia, among Siberian tribes, in South East Asia, the Pacific Islands, and later in Babylonian-Assyrian, Greek, Roman, and early Christian cultures.²⁰

As related by Tylor, Oldfield and Schoolcraft claim the earth and sky of the aborigines of Australia were filled with evil spirits and the Algonquin Indians of North America thought their "visible and invisible creation is animated with various orders of malignant or benign spirits, who preside over the daily affairs and over the final destinies of men."²¹

As to a dualistic theology by primary peoples, Tylor alludes to the Twin Brothers myth of the Iroquois, but astutely points out its current version was told in 1825 by the Christian Chief David Cusick and reveals Biblical copying. From an earlier version, given by Father Brebeuf, missionary to the Hurons in 1636, the dualistic complexion changes from good mind and bad mind to dark one and white one. According to the earlier story, Aataentsic the Moon fell from heaven and bore two sons, Taouiscaron and Iouskeha. At

¹⁸ Tylor, *Religion*, 197-198.

¹⁹ Ake Hultkrantz, *Soul and the Native Americans* (Woodstock, Connecticut: Spring Publications, 1997), 201.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 209-225.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 272.

some point they fought, with louskeha winning. From this part of the story, a sort of dualism seems to surface. louskeha, who was at some point associated with the sun, would be the white one (or light one?) who prevailed over the dark one. This would seem to indicate good prevailing over bad. Another dualistic feature was that louskeha was seen as a benefactor to the Iroquois, where Aataentsic, the moon, the mother of the two sons, makes men die and is considered evil. But when the story is taken as a whole, the balance of dualistic polarity becomes unequal. When men die, their spirits travel to a cabin at the end of the earth where Sun and Moon live and there louskeha (Sun) takes away the harm Aataentsic (Moon) intends them. But there in the cabin, Sun and Moon live together, with no apparent quarrel between them.²²

A tendency toward dualism is revealed by Eliade's account of central Asian and Siberian rituals involving the shaman's ascent to heaven and whose central role is healing the sick by retrieving the soul stolen by demons. In an Australian initiation of medicine men, they ascend to heaven and descend to a subterranean world.²³

It is with a certain amount of caution and suspicion we digest the accounts given by early Europeans about the level of participation evil spirits were considered to have in the lives of primary people.²⁴ The evil spirits or demons that were accounted for may have been the demons they saw in their own minds. On the other hand the assumption that primary peoples' thinking may not have reached a complexity of theology and social order, which defines or personifies evil in its physical, behavioral, conceptual, or supernatural form, might also fall short of objective survey. In fact, the indication is their theology may have been more complex, with various principals residing variously, having various purposes.

The Eminence of Discomfort and Emanation of Evil

The human consideration about what is bad and ultimately what is evil comes from our place in physical circumstance. Because humans are completely vulnerable to the environment, a state of vicarious-use and social dependency is created. Survival is accomplished vicariously, requiring with it a state of awareness about dangers and thus a more complete aptitude toward event-retention.

As a result of our physical vulnerability, awareness about dangers is heightened, but unlike other animals with natural abilities to face danger and survive, all circumstances of survival are answered vicariously, from the construction of weapons to protect and hunt, to the building of shelters, to the making of clothes, to the making of tackle, and the building of boats to fish. Because of the many dangers, construction techniques and survival strategies that have to be performed and passed on to survive, much has to be retained mentally.

Another feature to develop is dependency. Because of each person's own vulnerability, dependency on others to survive is accentuated and community is therefore immediate and collective effort necessary; attachment to others and to products crafted is intensified and infused with emotion. Therefore with developed event-retention and

²² Ibid., 406-410.

²³ Mircea Eliade, *Essential Sacred Writings From Around the World* (San Francisco, California: Harper-Collins Publishing, 1967), 424, 428.

²⁴ For an interesting discussion about the problems involved in understanding the religious, social and psychological mind-set of a foreign people and relating that back into the language and culture one knows with the intent of staying true to the conceptual form originally delivered, read Codgrington's preface of *The Melanesians* and pages 116-118. Though he was an early missionary to the Melanesians and had his own prejudices he understood the importance in preserving the cultural history of the people he was trying to convert and interpreting that history in unadulterated form. Read also Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, 1984), 396, and the similar problems ethnographers face.

poignant dependency there is an increased awareness about others and things and the relation of self to others and things which become “possessions” cherished and protected.

Because of the emotional attachment that is thus created when others and things are affected in a negative way--taken, harmed or destroyed--discomfort is experienced and the event is remembered, not just as something that is uncomfortable or bad, which is within the realm of control, but something that goes beyond discomfort.

With the occurrence of calamity, another thing affected, with emotional and psychological consequence, is the all-important human feature of control. The making of tools, weapons, shelters, and the formulation of strategies to survive are all about controlling circumstances to enhance chances at survival and provide comfort. But the same conditions which require control engender an acute awareness about the precariousness of the existential condition and the discomfort it can bring mentally and physically. The fret over control comes from the necessary and indispensable need for it in the face of its fleeting nature and the emotional ties to its loss, which makes its loss the object of disdain. Thus evil becomes the antagonist to comfort.

The Personification of Evil

There are two important things which separate evil from what is bad. Evil always involves intelligence and it always creates disorder—disorder in the mind, social disorder, or personal physical disorder and since evil is an intelligent act this makes its personification natural. The personification of evil is in turn fully realized and conceptually solidified because of the need to control.

It is a unique characteristic that because humans exercise control over immediate things--the making of tools, shelters, weapons, etc.--it would be assumed control could be extended to things beyond control, the weather, future events, others out of reach. It follows then, since one can control future events, to bless or to curse, when bad things happen to ones household or tribe that same kind of control must have been behind the calamity received. Therefore, calamity received is caused by a person or personage, and since the act received is calamitous and is caused by a person, it is therefore evil.

Finally, beside the rationale that evil is caused by a person, its convenience as a force that can be reckoned with, with means of counter-control, further welds the association of evil to a person. In other words, the fact that people can control immediate and distant events, when unwanted events are received and the fact they are received from a person, puts those events within the realm of control through ritualized magic, propitiation, cursing, cajoling, or bribes. Therefore, since evil involves calamity caused by a person, this provides the psychological need to have a means of control when in fact circumstances are beyond control. If calamity occurs, despite any counter means of control, thought toward control is saved because avoiding the calamity was within control, but because of action out of sync with the prescribed order to ritual, the calamity occurred. Any future repeat can be avoided with the loyal maintaining of the prescribed order. This is why primary peoples' rituals were often complex and close attention was made to the teaching and the fulfilling of the ritual according to prescription. If the outcome desired was not achieved, fault had to lie in erroneous performance at some point in the prescribed order.²⁵

²⁵Complexity to ritual itself served to ensure the desired outcome by the virtue if all the hurdles involving proper gesticulations, singing, sayings, dancing, and movement, were performed in proper sequence and combination, the likelihood of a good outcome would be achieved. The complexity to the ritual also creates a fraternity of interest in its teaching and performance, thereby strengthening communal bond.

The Association of Evil to Darkness

As mentioned, humans have no natural ability or physical means to survive the environment, except to do everything vicariously. The awareness of that weakness is heightened at night because our physical disability to survive at night is greater. With no claws, fangs, or fur; with relatively poor eyesight and poor hearing; with relative diminutive strength; with no natural ability at camouflage; being slow to catch and slow to keep from being caught, the awareness of these disabilities creates a feeling of vulnerability accentuated at night in the form of fear. A cat at night is not afraid, but is in fact on the hunt because it can see; because human eyesight is poor in comparison, that disability is accentuated at night and the realization of it results in fear.

Where other animals are deficient in one area they make up in others. If they have poor eyesight, as with bats, they can echo-locate. Or their sense of hearing is acute or their sense of smell is enhanced. If they are weak in comparison to a predator, they may have good eyesight, great hearing, and can flee with sufficient speed, or they can hide. With humans the number of disabilities, with no compensating abilities to survive, are almost complete, the awareness of which is heightened at night and turned into fear. That fear is only allayed with cooperative effort and vicarious-use, in the making of weapons and shelter. So when night comes, when shelter is taken, with weapons at the ready, behind a protective fire, and in the company of others, the existential fear is, to a degree, mitigated and a barrier is thrown up against the darkness which becomes the residence of calamity. It is natural then the bringer of calamity, a person evil, would be associated with the place where calamity resides and fear abides, and why principals which represent the negative, the bad, and evil, would be placed in caves, in the earth or in forests where darkness prevails.

Conclusion

The "problem of evil" is a phrase one often comes across in the course of its study. Its subjectivity, relativity, and the theological problems involved with its discussion become problematic to its definition and explanation. But when it comes to social function, some relativity is peeled away. A concept of evil not only serves to clarify the good, but it creates discussion as to when evil is disparate from bad and has the potential to move behavior toward the good through the same reflective discussion about its receipt and application. But as evil clarifies the good it also clarifies itself. For behind the discussion about what it is and its cause is a search for conclusive definition. When consensus is reached at its behavioral definition, social order is also clarified when evil is defined by its dysfunction to it.

At the primary level the emanation of evil is made apparent by its identification as a thing which brings discomfort to a level of disdain. Where calamity is experienced and remembered, and as emotional ties to things and others are severed, it becomes a hated thing antagonistic to comfort. As evil emerges from the existential situation it becomes more defined as it robs control from those on whom calamity has fallen and becomes personified for the very reason that control has to be maintained. An intelligent principal can be influenced therefore evil in a person is a means where control over the existential situation is exercised.

The association of darkness to evil also emerges from the circumstance of acute physical vulnerability, the awareness of which is accentuated at night. Though existential fear is mitigated with the taking of shelter and when in the company of others, since it is at night or in darkness where calamity resides, the bringers of calamity, intelligent principals or persons, are therefore associated with and placed in it.

Biographical Note

Patrick Scott Smith is a business owner, writer, and independent scholar. He has been working on the facets of psychology in religion from an anthropological/existential point of view and has been presenting material for the AAR and ASSR in the Central, Southwest, and Southeast regions. He also has presented research on the Herod's Harbor project for the ASOR in the same regions. He recently has become a member to the Missouri Academy of Science and will be presenting his social-scientific views to that association. At present he is working on a book relevant to the religious interests mentioned.

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Lilith: Lie, Lore or Hardcore?

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Introduction

Lilith has been depicted as a monster of the night, goddess of the storm and purveyor of disease, Queen of all vampires, Adam's non-submissive first wife and his fraternal twin. She is the demonized mother of the succubus and the incubus. She invades the dreams of priests. Lilith is a symbol of woman's liberation. Historical evidence points to the possibility of Lilith's existence. The historical documentation of Lilith is not necessary to prove her existence, because the ideology that she stands for forged her into existence.

The Legend of Lilith

There are many reoccurring myths and legends of Lilith. According to legend, Lilith was created at the same time as the first man, the Biblical Adam. (Mack 1999) Some Legend states that Lilith was created out of dust just as Adam was, yet some legend states that she was his Siamese twin connected to his back.(Powell 1997) One thing was certain; Lilith was created as Adam's equal. According to The Alphabet of Ben-Sira, Life was wonderful in the Garden of Eden until the two argued about consummation. (Meyers 1997) Adam wanted to hold the dominant position during intercourse (commonly known as missionary style) but Lilith did wish him to be dominant because they were created equal. Lilith requested to either lie side by side or to occupy the dominant position during intercourse. (Mack 1999) Adam forcefully refused her request.(Mack 1999) She uttered the magical name of G-d and flew away to the wilderness. (Mack 1999)

Adam was upset by the fact that Lilith fled to the wilderness and complained to G-d begging Him to bring her back to the garden. (Mack 1999) So G-d sent the three angels Senoy, Sansenoi, and Semangelof to bring Lilith back to the Garden of Eden. (Mack 1999) The Three heavenly messengers threatened Lilith and bade her to return to the garden. Enraged, Lilith refused to return to the Garden of Eden cursing mankind saying "Leave me! I was created only to cause sickness to infants. If the infant is male, I have dominion over him for eight days after his birth, and if female, for twenty days." (Mack 1999) Lilith did however promise never to kill children who wear an amulet bearing the names of the three angels Senoy, Sansenoy and Semangelof. (Mack 1999)

Ancient texts including Lilith

Lilith is mentioned in many ancient texts including the Bible and the Talmud. (Humm 1997) A widely discussed verse containing Lilith is found in Isaiah 34. That tells of G-d's judgment against the nations. Isaiah 34:14 tells how the land of Edom will be overtaken by wild animals. Wild animals will be the only creatures that survive during the wrath of the L-rd. The verse reads "Wildcats shall meet with hyenas, goat-demons shall call to each other; there too Lilith shall repose, and find a place to rest." (The Oxford Bible, Isaiah 34:14) In some translations of the Bible Lilith is referred to as a "night monster". While this verse alone does not prove the existence of Lilith it does make a reference to her existence. Genesis (1:27) states, "So G-d created man in His own image, in the image of G-d He created him; male and female he created them" clearly stating that G-d created man and woman in His own image at the same time. Later, Genesis (2:22-23) states, "Then the LORD G-d made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man. The man

said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man'" clearly stating that Eve was created from Adam's rib. Therefore the Bible either has an inconsistency about the creation of woman or Lilith was the first created woman.

In the Talmud (the Jewish book of law and customs), Lilith is mentioned several times. (Humm 1997) The Talmud warns men not to sleep in a house alone and warns that if they disobey this law that they may be seized by Lilith. (Humm 1997) The Talmud tells a tale of Adam, the first man, fasting in the desert because he was mourning his bringing death into the world. (Humm 1997) While he was fasting in the desert Lilith would come to him in the night and she would steal his nightly emissions of semen. (Humm 1997) With this semen she created all of the incubus and succubus. (Humm 1997) The Talmud also makes a reference to Lilith wondering at night stealing the semen of men much like she did to the first man. (Humm 1997)

Lilith Through Time

Lilith is mentioned in several other ancient texts. She is a woman to be feared in Goethe's *Faust part I*. (Scerba 1999) Rossetti, an Italian poet and artist, wrote a poem about the beauty and deadliness of this female seductress and he also painted the famous 'Lady Lilith'. (Scerba 1999) An ancient text famous for containing Lilith's tale is The Alphabet of Ben-Sira. (Mack 1999) This text dates back to A.D. 700 and gives an account of what happened in the Garden of Eden. In Islamic lore, Lilith is thought to have engaged in intercourse with the Devil and produced the feared Jinn. (Hefner 2004)

In the modern world Lilith is referenced often. She appears the series of novels 'Incarnations of Immortality' by Piers Anthony. In the eighth book *Under a Velvet Cloak*, the ghost of Lilith tells her account of what actually happened in the Garden of Eden which is quite similar to the account in the Alphabet of Ben-Sira. (Anthony 2007) Lilith is an embodiment of excess evil power in the Capcom video game Darkstalkers. She appears as a vampire and as the mother of demons in Marvel comic books. (Marvel 2009) Lilith is the name of a rebellious all female rock band from Colombia. There is an almost endless list of examples of Lilith in the modern world.

Theories about Lilith

The story of the expulsion of Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden is well known. Lilith has been accused of being the serpent that chorused Eve to eat the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. (Melton 2007) She has also been accused of convincing Cane to murder his brother, Able. (Melton 2007) Lilith is the legendary mother incubus and the succubus. (Mack 1999) The succubus comes in the night forcing intercourse upon unsuspecting men and steals their semen. She is a demon that appears as a beautiful woman with wings. The succubus can invade a man's dreams and make him fall wildly in love with her while she steals every last bit of his life force. (Mack 1999) In turn the incubus retrieves the stolen seed from the succubus and impregnates a human female with its demon spawn. (Mack 1999)

Lilith and Feminism

Since 1972 Lilith has been a symbol of women escaping oppression in a male dominated world. (Meyers 1997) The 1970's were a crucial time for the woman's rights movement especially in the Jewish culture. (Meyers 1997) Jewish women needed a role model, someone to stand behind, but most of all they needed someone to unite them under

a feminist ideology. Judith Plaskow, an expert on feminist theology revived Lilith and made her a cornerstone that would bring Jewish feminists together. (Meyers 1997) Just four years later Aviva Cantor created and published Lilith magazine. (Meyers 1997) Cantor pointed out that the story of Lilith proved that a patriarchal society was not divinely influenced instead it was a creation of man. (Meyers 1997) Today the well respected, Lilith magazine has printed over 130 volumes.

New chronicles of Lilith were written, but the most complex and influential legend was written by the Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb. (Meyers 1997) In Gottlieb's version of the story G-d is not male but female. She created the world, the heavens, and the oceans. (Meyers 1997) From the womb of the sea Lilith breaks free in all her glory with fiery wings and a love for the sky. (Meyers 1997) G-d sees that Lilith is lonely so She creates man out of the dust of the earth. Being a creature of the earth, Adam is afraid of Lilith's wings. (Meyers 1997) Lilith temporarily detaches her wings of fire to rid Adam of his fears. Adam and Lilith sit together and share tales of wonder with each other. (Meyers 1997) After a while, Lilith longs for the sky so she reaches for her wings but Adam not wanting her to leave forces her to the ground. (Meyers 1997) Adam realizing the power he has over her forces himself on her. In all of the terror Lilith falls asleep and wakes up as the earthly Eve. (Meyers 1997) The Rabbi's message is that women are not only equal to their male oppressors but that women could soar over men with wings of fire.

Conclusion

Even with the historical references to Lilith, skeptics may still feel there is no concrete evidence of her existence. Some may say that there is no way to prove that she is or was real. The joy of young adult readers is very real in the 'Incarnations of Immortality' series. Lilith is alive in the history of woman's rights. Lilith represents equality of men and woman. She is an important part of the Judeo-Christian creation story that has long been forgotten. Lilith has been evil, disease and raging storm personified. The idea of Lilith is as real as the ideas of love, equality and freedom. She embodies all of those ideas and more. Lilith has made such an impact on our society that even if she did not exist historically she still exists ideologically.

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Demonology: Spiritual or Mental Illness

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Abstract

Mark 9:17-25: I brought you my son. He is controlled by a spirit. Because of this, my son can't speak anymore. When the spirit takes hold of him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth. He grinds his teeth. And his body becomes stiff. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit. But they couldn't do it (NlrV).

Demons have existed in a variety of forms over the centuries and nearly all-magical traditions include the nature and actions of demons in their lore. Details of demons, their activities, hierarchies, and interactions with humans are equally vast in demonological literature dating from the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the early modern period. This paper will open a dialogue regarding demon possession as a spiritual illness versus a mental illness. The history of demons and demon possessions will be described using a historical and literature review. Sources include the bible, folklore, books, academic journals, and the internet. Demonology will be described as a cross culturally consistent set of symptoms that are interpreted as either medically as mental illness or spiritually as demonic possession.

Introduction

A demon (Greek *daimon*, "spirit") is a nonphysical creature of (usually) malign nature in most current magical traditions (Greer, 2005). In this Bible passage from Mark, Jesus heals a boy who had an evil spirit, or demon. Jesus tells his followers that, "This kind can come out only by prayer" (NlrV). According to Nevius' *Demon Possession* there are certain signs of demon possession: (1) persistently and consistently acting out of character with a new personality. (a) The new personality says he is a demon. (b) He/she uses personal pronouns; first person for the demon, third person for the possessed. (c) The demon uses titles or names. (d) The demon has sentiments, facial expressions and physical manifestations that harmonize with the above. (2) It gives knowledge and intellectual power not possessed by the subject. (3) There is a complete change of moral character - aversion and hatred to God and especially to Christ (Montgomery, 1976).

Origin of Demons

Demons have existed in a variety of ways over the centuries. Nearly all-magical traditions include the nature and actions of demons in their lore. Details of demons, their activities, hierarchies, and interactions with humans are equally vast in demonological literature dating from the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the early modern period. All of the various classes of demonology whether it be classical, Pagan, Gnostic, Cabalistic, goetic, or Christian are interpenetrate to a very great degree. The evil spirits based in Pagan folk traditions found themselves in the Jewish and Christian demon lore (Greer, 2005).

Medieval Christian Europe had a fairly definite means of defining magic. In opposition to religious ritual and ceremony, it was a method of invoking or employing

supernatural spiritual forces as well as occult natural powers. Asserted generation after generation through clerical authorities, divine power was drawn into religion. The power of demons was invoked through the use of magic. A single divine force was not a concept of most ancient peoples. Numerous deities were held to be real and powerful. Additionally, most ancient cultures believed in a wide range of lesser beings inhabiting the spiritual world. The Greeks referred to them as *daimones* and the Romans called them *daemones*. Writing in both Latin and Greek, early Christian authorities created the concept of demons – inherently evil beings and fallen angels at the command of Satan sent to corrupt humanity. Ironically, the ancient cultures did not consider these creatures necessarily evil or hostile to humanity (Bailey, 2007).

The Incubus and Succubus

The term *incubus* is from the Latin *incubo* meaning *burden* or *weight*. An incubus is also known as a demon lover. This demon creates the illusion of being a male human by either entering a human corpse or using human flesh to create a body of his own. Seeking sexual relations with female humans while they sleep, the incubus was an angel with an insatiable lust for women. This angel fell from grace and was able to prey on women by raping them in their sleep. Appearing as real people, some clever incubi impersonate husbands, neighbors, and friends. If the incubus was freely invited into a woman's bed, everyone in the house would be put into a deep sleep. The demon lover was a nasty lover with a sexual organ that was painfully large, freezing cold, made of iron, or even double pronged (Occultopedia, n.d.).

The term succubus is from the Latin *succubare* meaning *to lie under*. The succubus is a female demon who creates the illusion of being a female human. This demon seeks to have sexual relations with human males as they sleep. The succubus draws energy from the man to the point of exhaustion or even death. The legend of the succubus was used to explain wet dreams and sleep paralysis. The princess of all succubi is Nahemah. Lilith and Lilan (Jewish), Belili (Sumerian), and Rusalka (Slavic) were notable succubi (Occultopedia, n.d.).

Demon Possession

Vincentius von Berg made a list of indications in order to ascertain if a person was possessed: (1) Desiring the worst food; (2) Inability to retain or digest food and continual vomiting; (3) Experiencing a heavy weight in the stomach; (4) Feeling a gnawing in the lower belly, rapid pulsation in the neck, or pain in the kidneys. Others can feel continuous pain in the head that seems oppressed, shattered, or pierced; (5) Trouble with the heart that feels as if it is being torn, eaten, pierced, constricted, or stifled; (6) Swelling of the head swell up and inability to move; (7) Shrieking out loud accompanied by frequent and sudden pains that are indescribable; (8) Weakening of the body with emaciation, impotency, and extreme languor; (9) Feeling whipped, torn, bound, or constricted, especially the heart and bones; (10) Feeling like the coldest wind or a fiery flame runs through their stomach; (11) Oppression by a melancholy disposition. They are so weak they do not speak or converse with people; (12) Constricting eyes and a covering of the body by a yellow or ashen color; (13) Attack by some serious trouble, seized with fear and terror, and eyes change to a dark color; (14) Physicians cannot diagnose what the affliction is and medication is useless; (15) Employing witchcraft for hatred, love, sterility, storm raising, ligature, or to harm animals (Robbins, 1959).

Spirit possession is known to occur in many areas of the world (Mischel & Mischel, 1958). A demonic possession is a state in which a human body (or occasionally another

living organism) is taken over by a demonic entity. While these are all indicators of possession, folklore and magical traditions from around the world and throughout history suggest that possession by demons has a large cultural component that varies by religion (Greer, 2005). Possession is technically distinguished from obsession. In both cases, the victim is not held responsible for what he or she says or does. In obsession, the devil was presumed to “besiege” or “sit without” the body of the afflicted [Latin: *ob-sedere*]. In possession, the devil beset the person inside the body. Early saints suffered from obsession because a virtuous person was immune to possession. Involuntary possession resembled epilepsy or hysteria in external manifestations. While the Devil could initiate possession with God’s permission, demonologists credit witches with causing possessions (Robbins, 1959). It is thought that sorcerers and heretics can be detected by their foul and fetid odor. There is an association of odors with purity and morality (Largey & Watson, 1972).

Mental Illness and Demon Possession

During the Middle Ages in Europe, religious beliefs, specifically Christianity, dominated the concepts of mental illness. Mentally ill people were possessed by the devil or demons. They were accused of being witches and causing harm to others. These mentally ill people, instead of receiving care from physicians, became objects of religious inquisition and barbaric treatment (MSN Encarta, 1997-2007). Some people that were possessed by demons have been misdiagnosed as mentally ill and placed in mental hospitals. The classic symptoms of schizophrenia are different from New Testament demon possession (Schizophrenia and Demons, n.d.).

For example, in the New Testament, demons spoke in rational dialogue. People with schizophrenia speak in *word salads*. While mentally ill people seek spiritual assistance, demons have an aversion to Christ. Demons give supernatural knowledge to their host while mentally ill people never exhibit clairvoyance. While demons tend to be secretive, those who claim to be demon-possessed are not. Supernatural phenomena are indications of evil spirits not mental illness. When medicine helps the problems demons are not involved. In the case of Mark 5:15, the restoration to a *right mind* may only mean the former demoniac was no longer suicidal or violent. There may or may not be any reference to schizophrenia. If a *right mind* does refer to a healing from insanity, then we still may not view all cases of mental illness as caused by demons. Demons cause epilepsy, deafness, blindness, muteness, and suicidal feeling according to the New Testament (Schizophrenia and Demons, n.d.).

Methods of Possession

In order to understand the methods by which demons possess humans, it is important to first distinguish the difference between a ghost and a demon. Ghosts are generally considered to be the spirit essence of a deceased person or even an animal. A demon was never physically alive. Due to the fact that demons are spirit beings, and sometimes function in similar ways, they are often mistaken as being ghosts. There is quite a difference between the two. Demons are usually very easy to identify as long as they are not hiding. There is typically a revolting stench similar to rotten flesh or sulfuric acid accompanied by growling sounds. Pushing, shoving, hitting, and even scratching are ways in which a demon makes contact. Cases involving people being thrown through the air and attacked have been attributed to demonic possession. All of these actions are meant to break down a person’s free will in order to make way for possession (Hawes & Wilson, 2007).

Although demons do not technically possess inanimate objects such as dolls and statues, they will sometimes attach or link themselves to certain objects. Examples would include dolls or statues that have been *personified*, or given recognition as an object of profane worship, or used in a ceremonial practice in which demonic entities were invoked. Demonic attachments to inanimate objects are not limited to dolls and statues. The most common inanimate object to which a demonic entity will attach itself is the infamous Ouija board. Demons are usually brought to our realm through people using Ouija boards, participating in séances, using curses, or worshiping the devil. Malevolent spirits do not just appear – they are normally invited by someone who dabbles in the occult. Typical non-human spirit activity includes but is not limited to whispering voices, black shadowy figures, violent acts, or targeted paranormal activity (Hawes & Wilson, 2007).

Demon Exorcism

An exorcism, the process of driving out a possessing or obsessive spirit from a person, object, or place has been included in most of the world's magical systems since very ancient times. The power of exorcism was given to a specific class of clergy (Greer, 2005). The rite of exorcism of a person possessed by an evil spirit is lengthy and impressive. It is not to be undertaken lightly, and certain safeguards are recommended. There should be the presence of witnesses and a warning to the priest not to say or do anything that "might provoke obscene thoughts." The Roman Catholic Church practices the service of exorcism; it is rejected by Protestant churches (Robbins, 1959).

Christ was described as commanding and casting out demons throughout the Gospels. He bequeathed His power over demons to his disciples and ultimately to all Christians. In His name, they were able to exorcise evil spirits. The apostles of Christ and other early Christians competed with practitioners of magic and won believers by demonstrating the superiority of their power. They were little different from the ancient world cult priests who set themselves up as superior to base magicians (Bailey, 2007).

Conclusion

Mark 5:13: And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand); and were choked in the sea (NIV).

Demonology is the study of demons. Demons are supernatural beings, spirits, or forces capable of influencing human lives. In many religions, people with special authority have been performing exorcisms. Exorcism is the practice of expelling demons that possess people or places. The belief in evil spirits and their ability to influence the lives of people dates back to prehistoric times. The incubus is a male demon who seeks to have sexual relations with sleeping women and the succubus is female version that preys on sleeping men (MSN Encarta, 1997 – 2007). Demons do not technically possess inanimate objects yet they will attach themselves to certain objects. The infamous Ouija board is an example of an object that a demon will attach itself and will be used as a portal to enter our realm (Hawes & Wilson, 2007). Some people that are possessed by demons have been misdiagnosed as mentally ill and placed in mental hospitals (Schizophrenia and Demons, n.d.). Playing a role in the traditions of most religions, demons have appeared in both literature and mythology (MSN Encarta, 1997 – 2007).

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Spiritual Development in Young Children: Preventing the Devolution of Natural Spiritual Awareness

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Introduction

Young children are the future of the world. Therefore, their spiritual development should be of paramount concern to the religious, educational, social, and political community. Spiritual awareness in young children should take center stage in our efforts to guide children's development. However, maintaining the perspective that there is an "Evolution of Spirit" in young children makes the assumption that children are born spiritless and must evolve. As members of the religion, science, and philosophy of Spiritualism¹, we believe the concept of evolution of spirit to be a misperception for children are born naturally spiritually aware; their awareness must be retained rather than instilled. We are three-fold beings: mind, body, and spirit. Therefore, we are born spiritual beings. In fact, it is more often the case that we see devolution of spiritual understanding in young children, as well-meaning caregivers impose the dogma of one tradition or another upon the naturally spiritually aware child and society devalues the child's awareness. Rather than watching the unfolding of Spiritual Awareness, we see example after example of how society cuts the cord of the naturally spiritually awake and aware child's connection with God.

The purpose of this presentation is three-fold:

- 1) to describe "the naturally spiritually awake and aware child" from the Spiritualist perspective,
- 2) to propose a model of the devolution of natural spirituality as a foundation for its prevention,
- 3) to identify those actions that adults take, "in all good faith" that lead the naturally spiritual child away from his or her spiritual nature, and
- 4) to discuss imaginary friends as one aspect of natural spiritual awareness.

First, we present a definition and theoretical model of natural spiritual awareness and how that is compromised through childhood. Next, we explore in depth one aspect of the model, symbolic development and the appearance of invisible friends, and finally we

Footnote

1 Barnes (1999, p.1) defines "Spiritualism" as a Science, Philosophy and Religion of continuous life based upon the demonstrated fact of communication by means of Mediumship with those who live in the Spirit World." There are many Spiritualist organizations worldwide with registries of church affiliates. Some of these are the National Spiritualist Association of Churches, the Universal Spiritualist Association, the International Foundation for Spiritual Knowledge, the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain, the Episcopal Spiritualist Churches, and the Indiana Association of Spiritualists.

present case histories in support of our model. Thus, this is a qualitative, phenomenological² study (Zalta, 2008).

Procedures

In gathering case histories for this phenomenological study we developed the questionnaire (Appendix A) based on our knowledge of phenomenological research, descriptions of spiritual development in children (Hart, 2003), the eternalization branch of four-dimensionalism theory (Rea, 2003), and our own personal experiences raising sensitive children. Participants were selected from individuals known to the researchers or from individuals referred by other participants. Data were gathered during consented extensive interviews. Interview material is reported synoptically in support of arguments in this paper.

What Do We Mean by “The Naturally Spiritually Aware Child”?

The authors of this paper contend that children are born naturally spiritually awake and aware. We are not simply incarnate beings seeking our spiritual side. We are Spirit that has dropped temporarily into these things we think of as our bodies. We have always been Spirit and will continue to be Spirit long after we return to the dust whence we came. When a child is born, the Spirit realm is where he has just come from before he manifested in human form. Newborns speak the language of the heart, soul, and mind, which are formed by feelings and thoughts; this is the language they have most recently spoken, the language of Spirit. We see reference to Heart knowledge and language in many sacred writings across religions.

Example 1: Spiritual Awareness as Thought

As the holy one I recognize thee, O Wise
Lord,
When he came to me as Good Mind;
The Silent Thought taught me the greatest
good
so that I might proclaim it.

Zoroastrianism, Avesta, Yasna 45.15

Example 2: Spiritual Awareness as Love

In the golden city of the heart dwells
The Lord of Love, without parts, without stain.
Know him as the radiant light of lights

Hinduism, Mundaka Upanishad 2.2.10

Example 3: Spiritual Awareness as Heart

The heart is the sanctuary at the center of which there is a little
space, wherein the Great Spirit dwells, and this is the Eye. This
is the Eye of the Great Spirit by which He sees all things, and

Footnote

2 According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view.

through which we see Him. If the heart is not pure, the Great
Spirit cannot be seen

Native American Religions, Black Elk, Sioux Tradition

Example 4: Spiritual Awareness as Heart

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance
Or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at
The things man looks at. Man looks at outward appearance, but
The Lord looks at the heart."

Judaism and Christianity, The Old Testament, 1 Samuel 16:7

We can see evidence of this language of the Spirit and the heart in the eyes of newborns, and we feel it in their emotions. Just listen to the words that parents speak³ upon gazing at a newborn baby.

- 1) "I felt like I was in the presence of a little Buddha, or the next Dalai Lama. He was such a wise, little old man." David, 36
- 2) "She had an aura about her that just spoke at some very deep level to my soul. I could not put my finger on it, but I knew the minute I met her that we had been connected forever and would remain connected for always. Such beauty. Such radiant inner peace." Raye, 25

Many parents report that the birth of their child was a spiritual experience (Hall, 2006), even those who are not necessarily spiritual or even religious report this. In the instance of parents who themselves have had spiritual gifts, a child's connection will be recognized early and encouraged, as was the case of Rena.

Rena, Mr. Misty, and Pops

Shandra has always been clairvoyant and her father always made her feel comfortable with her many gifts because he was gifted, too. She knew when someone would be crossing over and could hear the voices of spirit at a very young age. When Shandra had her daughter, Rena, she knew while still in the womb that Rena would also be gifted with spirit.

Rena is now a beautiful 3 ½ year old girl who when she glances in your direction you can feel eyes beam on you touching you from a distance. If you hesitate for a moment and catch her stare, you will feel her eyes penetrating you as if she can see inside your soul. Looking into her deep blue eyes you can't help but know she is wise for her years and you think she can read your mind. You truly can't take your eyes off of her when you first meet. Her little cherub face glistens from her beautiful red curly hair shimmering with an angelic aura around her.

On many occasions Rena's grandfather who she fondly calls "Pops" would take her to play with Pops and his best friend, Mr. Misty. They would truly bond and

Footnote

3 Pseudonyms are used throughout to protect the identity of the individuals reporting their experiences (VandenBos, 2001).

play together on many occasions. Recently Mr. Misty without notice died and Shandra wondered how she would approach Rena in understanding Mr. Misty's passing. On the day of the funeral, Rena slowly walked to the coffin holding her

mother's hand and looked at Mr. Misty. With a big smile, she blew him a kiss. Upon sitting down in the chapel, Rena looked up to her mother and said, "Everything will be okay; Pop will be with Mr. Misty soon."

Pop has been in remission from cancer for over a year. Shortly after Mr. Misty's passing, his cancer has returned and Shandra sadly reports Pops is going down hill fast.

Developmental Loci Where the Natural Spiritual Connection May Become Disrupted

The following premises guided the development of a model to describe how the naturally spiritually aware child loses his natural connection with his spiritual side.

Premise 1: We are all born spiritually aware of the presence of God. If this awareness is encouraged since childhood, not only will awareness of the non-physical, subconscious remain with us throughout life, but it will also flourish.

We are human beings; that is, we are human, yes, but we are also beings. Our human side connects us to this earthly plane; our being side is our naturally spiritually aware side. Unfortunately, humans take actions that tend to snuff out the natural spiritual connection in young children, resulting in a disconnect throughout life from our "being". Along with our first premise, that we are born naturally spiritually aware, is a second, equally important premise.

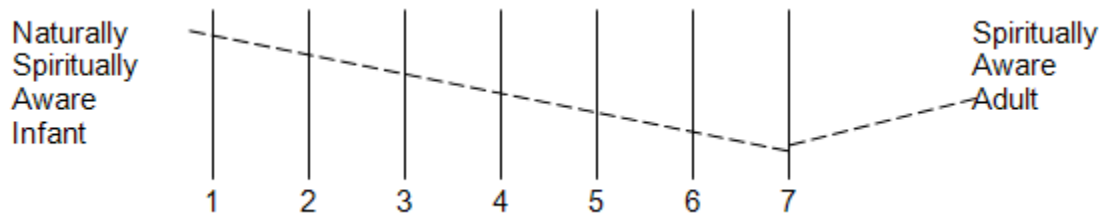
Premise 2: Adults tend to seek spirituality and a closer relationship with God with increased fervor as they age.

Whether by natural development, a personal tragedy or trauma, or a mountaintop experience, at some point along the way, many human beings will try to reconnect with their lost "being" side (Rowe & Allen, 2004). In fact, the numbers of individuals who consider themselves to be "religious" increase with every decade (<http://www.trinity.edu/~mkearl/ger-relg.html> Downloaded July 27, 2008).

Given that birth and death are often described as times of transcendence, we began to discuss the process by which the naturally spiritually aware child begins to lose his connection to Spirit. Figure 1 provides a crude schematic of how the devolutionary process occurs. The left side of the model represents the child whose spirit drops into this world in the vehicle of a human organism. The right side represents the adult who has transitioned back into Spirit; most adults struggle to regain spiritual awareness and enlightenment. The straight line across the top represents our potential to retain awareness of our naturally spiritually aware selves. The dotted line angling downward represents our devolution into doubt. The breaks in the lines indicate that there are many ways that this devolution may occur such as being raised in an atheistic family or use of drugs and alcohol, among others. The dotted line angling upward represents humankind's struggle to regain its spiritual connection, or connection of the human to the being. The breaks in the line indicate that many things allow us to remain doubtful as we move along our path. The fact that the line never fully recovers its original position indicates that few of us ever reach that state of enlightenment in which we were born. The numbered lines indicate seven specific developmental instances that we all face and the potential they hold for devolution or evolution.

Figure 1

Potentials for Devolution of Natural Spiritual Awareness



Instances of Spiritual Devolution

The process of devolution is integrally intertwined with the process of de-valuing. Along life’s path, children experience natural events that have the potential to enhance or detract from their spiritual awareness. Most often, the child will present an awareness of his spiritual nature, which will be followed rather swiftly by a correction from someone in the form of devaluing the experience.

Some common instances where devolution and devaluing occur are listed in Table 1. In addition to instantiating the loci of devolution, we intend to investigate what might be done alternatively to build on the child’s natural spiritual awareness. The challenge is for us as spiritual leaders to help uphold these lovely little human beings, and to make sure that equal support is given to the development of their being side as is given to the development of their human side. Note that the examples below do not form an exhaustive list. The experiences that instantiate devaluation of the naturally spiritually aware child are legion. Table 1 presents some of the key events of child development where devaluation may occur.

Table 1

Some Common Instances Where the Naturally Spiritually Aware Child Is Devalued

Type	Description	Case Comments
Spiritual awareness shortly after a child’s birth.	Many parents describe the birth process as “a spiritual experience”. They look at their newborn and <i>know</i> that there is a God. Conventional wisdom from family, friends, and pop-psychology introduce skepticism.	<p>“It was so beautiful. I felt a fullness in the air, as if the entire angel kingdom were in the room.” (Ramon, age 32, first child).</p> <p>“I know there is more to life than just this existence. I have seen it in my babies’ eyes.” (Tanya, age 29, mother of 3).</p> <p>“He used to look up at the corner of the room and squeal with delight, a single tear of joy running down his</p>

		face. I'm sure he was seeing God or a spirit or angel or something at those times." (Susan, age 38, firstborn).
The advent of symbolic play	Symbolic play begins during the first year of life and allows the child to represent his thoughts through actions.	"When I would see things as a child and play with them, my father would say I just had an overly active imagination." (Jonathan, age 19)
The advent of language	People interpret the world for us, tell us what to think, what to feel, and devalue us if we don't talk the way they talk, think the way they think. They misuse language to frame spirituality. Spirit is pure emotion. Any time you try to carve out words to describe it, you are going to miss the point. Language is left brain, organized, ordered, sequential, finite. Emotion is right brained, formless, and infinite, like Spirit.	"When my granddaughter was 2 1/2, her mother was helping her practice identifying the parts of their faces. Mandy would say and touch Lisa's eyes, nose, and mouth followed by Lisa touching her mommy's eyes, nose and mouth. One day she pointed to the air, said "eyes" and then said the name of her grandmother, who had died before she was born.' (Jill, age 60)
The development of Ego	The Euro-centric perspective on ego says that we start as undifferentiated in our awareness of ourselves versus others, move through various stages where we are controlled by others and then into the stage where we are attempting to control our world. Finally, after we develop a strong sense of who we are, we start the process of working toward a transcended state or back to the undifferentiated awareness with which we were born.	"I had to warn him not to tell people that he could see people who had passed on because they would think he was crazy." (Raye, age 54)
The onset of puberty	Children go through striking changes on all levels at puberty, and the last thing they want to appear to be is different, so they may take on or reject current philosophies based on what the crowd is doing.	"My girlfriend's father thought I was the devil because I talked about seeing Spirit. It scared her, so I had to pretend that I couldn't see things." (Lee, age 16)
Societal pressures	We spend our 20s trying to prove we are not our parents and are not going to turn out the way they hoped/feared/predicted and that we do not hold their opinions, then spend	When I need guidance, I have always sought prayer for answers. Since age 13, my answers would come in my dreams—a knowing, a

	our 30s in counseling trying to figure out how to let our demons go and what our place is in the world. This would not be so traumatic if we had maintained the consciousness thread throughout.	message. I listened to spirit and reaped many rewards: a husband of 30 years, returning to grad college at age 40, and starting a new career at 43. Jill, age 60.
Personal trauma/ mountaintop experience	Somewhere along the life path of most individuals, we experience either a trauma or crisis that shakes us to our core, or we are the fortunate ones who undergo a mountaintop experience.	“When my sister was dying, she said that our deceased uncle was there to get her. I knew then that there was a Spirit world. After she died, it was totally convinced of it because she had to be <i>somewhere</i> .” Sara, age 54

An In-Depth Look at One Instance of Devolution: The Development of Symbolic Play and Its Potential to Value or Devalue Spirituality

The ability to engage in symbolic play is a hallmark of the development of young children, and begins somewhere around the first year of life. Symbolic play is also a harbinger of the ability to use language, which is a complex symbol system (Bates, Benigni, Bretherton, Camaioni, & Volterra, 1997; Lifter & Bloom, 1998). Early symbolic play involves the ability to play appropriately with objects (e.g., the baby runs the toy car back and forth rather than chewing on it) (Casby, 2003). Later symbolic play involves ever-increasing social facility with play, moving from solitary play, to parallel play (playing alongside another child), to interactive play (taking turns contributing to the action), and ultimately, to dramatic or thematic play (Rosetti, 2001).

One place where normal child development meets Spiritual development is in the advent of imaginary companions. For many years, imaginary companions were considered less than desirable, and specialists in psychological development of no less stature than Freud often cautioned parents about their child’s fascination with imaginary companions. In recent years, psychologists at the University of Washington and the University of Oregon have engaged in multi-year research to investigate the phenomenon, leading them to recast Freud’s concerns in a more positive light. For example, they found that by age 7, 2/3 of the 100 school aged children they interviewed reported having had an imaginary companion (Taylor, Carlson, Maring, Gerow, & Charley, 2004; Taylor, Cartwright, & Carlson, 1993). Imaginary companions were equally common in preschoolers and in school aged children. In fact, 31% of the school aged children and 28% of the preschool children stated that they were playing with an imaginary companion *at the time of the interview*. Children reported having multiple imaginary companions 57% of whom were human and 41% of whom were animals. Cognitively, imaginary companions are thought to help children deal with abstract symbols and thought and to develop their abstract thoughts about their own identity (Bouldin, 2006). Not only do they have imaginary companions, but the existence of imaginary companions tends to correspond to more mythical content in dreams and more vivid daydreams. The study children (ages 3 to 8 ½) spent more time in what adults call daydreaming and had an ability to “almost...see and hear the contents of their daydreams in front of them.”

Mind now that the above data were gathered scientifically. Science aside, though, those of us who are Spiritualists do not doubt the data one bit. Having had the experience of mediumship, we can understand what these children are seeing and hearing with their mind's ears and mind's eyes, and on rare occasion, three-dimensionally. We pose this question: What if we allowed children to have their imaginary companions? What would happen if we encouraged this? Among Spiritualists who encourage this in their children, many children grow up to become mediums and have their lives enriched by the existence of spirit guides and companions. The Case of Rena demonstrates the positive outcomes for a child whose family accepts her ability to see.

Skeptics at this point will be objecting to the notion of encouraging a child to interact with what they call "imaginary friends." We come full circle, though, when we try to convince children and youth to see a spiritual relationship with God. We chastise them for using their imagination to have a meaningful relationship but then we ask them to talk to God, to establish a personal relationship with him, to turn to him in all things. We say things like FROG, "fully rely on God". We say "Take it to the Lord in prayer." As Spiritualists we believe that a spark of God comes to children in a form that they can recognize. What if we not only allowed a child to believe in his Friend but actively encouraged him to believe? To talk to his Friend. To grow and mature in his relationship with his Friend. What if we helped the child not only see God *in* his Friend but as his Friend. Typically adults will tell a child, "Oh, stop that. It's just your imagination" and then, ironically, turn around and encourage the child to believe in the tooth fairy! And the Easter bunny? We tell a child to believe in Santa Claus or Santa won't bring him any presents, but we tell him to *stop* following his naturally spiritually aware heart and to stop believing in that spark of Spirit that is his imaginary companion, his *imagery* friend, his *image* perhaps of Spirit. When Jesus said in Mark 10:14 (*American Standard Version*), "Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God," he wasn't referring to the children's physical suffering, *per se*. Nor does "Let the children come unto me," explain the message. According to *Webster's 10th Collegiate Dictionary*, suffer also means "to undergo; to experience," "to feel keenly," and "to put up with as inevitable." *Let* the children undergo the experience of Spirit. Let them feel it keenly for it is inevitable.

One objection that is often raised at this point is this: What about when the child blames his Companion for his own misdeeds? The niece of one of the authors used to have an imaginary friend named Cousin Chrissie. When all was going well, she was "Good Chrissie" but when something bad happened that the niece did not want to take responsibility for, all of a sudden she was "Bad Chrissie" and Bad Chrissie got the rap for the naughty deed. Oddly enough, people used to say such things as "Oh, stop it. There isn't a Good Chrissie," but then they chuckled and were amused, and commented wryly about Bad Chrissie, saying things like "Oh, yeah! Ya gotta watch out for that Bad Chrissie. She's a real pistol!" Should we be alarmed when a child uses his imagination in this way? As Spiritualists and as specialists in the child development arena, we say no. We see this as just a harbinger of things to come in the lives of many adults, for adults do the exact same thing. We say, "I would have been here on time if it hadn't been for the jerk who cut me off at the light" when, in fact, if we had simply left on time, we would not have arrived late. We thank God when things are going well (Good Chrissie) but we blame Him when they are not going well (Bad Chrissie). A popular little book that has been around for a while is entitled, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* (Kushner, 1981). Kushner says that there really is no explanation when bad things happen. The title could just as easily have been "When random things happen to random people." Pop culture has allowed us the indulgence of thinking that we cannot possibly be at fault. *We* cannot possibly be responsible.

Spiritualists believe in and affirm “the moral responsibility of the individual, and that we make our own happiness or unhappiness as we obey or disobey nature’s physical and spiritual laws.” (www.chesterfield.net downloaded July 2, 2008). Instead of breaking that naturally spiritual bond between the children and his God-given imagination, his God-given image Friend, his imaginary friend, we see it as an opportunity to fan the relationship with that God spark (Good Chrissie) and to teach the child personal responsibility (Bad Chrissie). Instead, we need to be telling the child that “God is good. God is in Good Chrissie. God is in you. Talk to God in Good Chrissie and listen to the good things that God says back to you. But God does not make bad things happen. God did not put the mustard on the kitty. Maybe it was an accident, or maybe someone didn’t know the kitty would roll on the sofa with all that mustard, but we cannot blame Bad Chrissie for this. Someone did this, not Bad Chrissie, so someone needs to clean it up.” Likewise we as adults cannot blame God when bad things happen. Bad things happen because we have disobeyed nature’s physical and spiritual laws. The case of Kayla and the Cemetery provides another example of children and the “imaginary friends” that Spiritualists perceive as spirit contact.

Kayla and the Cemetery

Kayla had very severe skin allergies when she was a baby. And, since the sun irritated both her skin and eyes, she refused to go out in the day unless she was in a car with heavily tinted windows, and did not want anything to do with going outside. We live in a dry climate where summertime temps reach 110 for about a month in the summer, and it’s extremely hot at night.

When she first wanted to go outside, we’d just had a brutal winter where every lawn in our little town froze and sprinklers burst. Come spring, the housing crunch and economy had started in a downward trend and no one bothered to replant their lawns. Not even the town tended the parks. All except one. The little town I live in has a graveyard on the outskirts and it is tended on a daily basis. Here, graves date back before the Civil War. I started taking her there; it was the safest thing to do because we didn’t need to worry about her dashing out into the streets. She loves it. She plays in the sprinklers on hot days and she enjoys playing a game where she closes her eyes, feels the engraved letters and tells me what they are. She enjoys the shade—and, apparently, the company. She loves these two graves of a mother and father. She goes to visit those first. That’s where I noticed a regularity in the light anomalies I was seeing in my photographs when I was taking pictures of her. She smiled at things just out of my site, began clapping at things I couldn’t understand, laughing and pointing at the sky. She was also giving strands of grass in offering to things I could not see. In hindsight, with the help of my camera, I now see the lights that represented the things she was seeing. I remember the day I took the pictures because she was just so happy that day and just wanted to play in the area of her two favorite tombstones. When I’m shooting pictures of her, I just let her do her own thing, she’s gotten used to the camera now.

Children will let you know when they are seeing Spirit (or imaginary friends to those who are not comfortable with the concept). The case of Lisa and her Mimi demonstrates this clearly and shows the importance of supportive parenting.

Lisa and Her Mimi

Listen to what children are saying. They will often cue you into their own little spiritual world. Children as young as three years of age are able to discern the difference between reality and fantasy. When they tell you of an experience they are having, don't devalue it. Accept what the child has said to you and ask for clarification.

One evening while Mandy and Robbie were lying in bed with their 2 ½ year old daughter Lisa resting between them on their king sized bed, they were all relaxed preparing Lisa for bedtime to take her back to her own room. No lights were on in the bedroom except some distant light from the hallway. Mandy had been working with Lisa in learning new words and so they were all practicing identifying the parts of their faces. Mandy would say and touch Lisa's eyes, nose, and mouth followed by Lisa touching her mommy's eyes, nose and mouth. Then her daddy repeated the exercise to Lisa with Lisa touching her daddy's face saying the correct words. As they all were lying with their heads on the pillow looking upward, Lisa said, "See the light" as she pointed to the right corner of the ceiling. "See the light mommy." Then Lisa used her finger pointing into the air saying, "Eyes, nose, mouth...eyes, nose, mouth." Mandy then softly asked, "Who is that Lisa?" Lisa immediately said with a confident clear response, "Mimi!" to Mandy's amazement. Mimi was her mother's godmother, her Great Aunt Mimi, who crossed over in 1999 at age 84. Mimi had always had a powerful connection with all the children and grandchildren, yet her name had never been spoken in front of Lisa who was born in 2005.

In addition to images of companions, children also report seeing angels. A fascinating book by psychologist Tobin Hart from the Child Spirit Institute in Carrollton, Georgia entitled "The Secret Spiritual World of Children" (1993), details the rich spiritual life of young children. Herein we repeat a description from the Child Spirit Institute website (<http://www.childspirit.net>):

Hart, urged on by his own child's "angel" experience, spent five years interviewing children, parents, and adults as well as searching through the literature of the world's wisdom traditions. What he discovered is that these experiences are pervasive and truly define children's extraordinary spiritual capacity. In *The Secret Spiritual Life of Children*, Hart explains how to recognize and nurture this deep connection, and help our children develop into spiritual whole human beings. It can also help adults rediscover their own childhood spiritual life. (Downloaded from <http://66.160.135.235/index.php/books> on July 2, 2008).

Below are case studies of two children's experiences with angels.

Lee and His Angel in Overalls

Lee is a 19-year-old male whose mother brought him to the attention of the researchers upon their call for subjects. She recommended him as a case study because she felt he had exhibited spiritual gifts since infancy. At the time of this writing, Lee is a college student residing in a dormitory; he lives with his parents in the house he grew up in during the summers. He aspires to work in a service field that would also have some degree of associated excitement and adventure. He has read this description and has given his consent for publication of the account.

Lee's mother recounted multiple episodes of his description of seeing angels for as long as he could talk. This would always occur when Lee had been in a dangerous situation. For example, he fell onto the driveway from a height of about 4 feet when he was three years old. Upon hitting the blacktop, he immediately called to his mother, "I OK. My angel gots me." According to his mother, he always credited his angel with taking care of him. When he was around 4 years old, he would describe his angel as a man dressed in overalls. This angel stayed with Lee until early adolescence.

Although Lee's parents raised him in a traditional Christian church, he always shared experiences of "seeing things" with his parents. When he was 14, circumstances led his mother to explore Spiritualism. As she learned about this belief-system, she would describe her newly found information to Lee, who would nonchalantly acknowledge that he was aware of such things. For example, he described having seen spirit lights when she mentioned these to him. (According to James VanPraagh 2008, spirit lights are among the first manifestations a person sees when becoming aware of these kinds of phenomena.)

When Lee was around 16, he began spontaneously sharing "messages" from the other side. In one instance, an aunt who lived several hundred miles away mentioned that an acquaintance of hers had made his transition to the other side. Lee asked, "Did he wear glasses and have OCD?" She acknowledged that he was correct about the glasses but would have to verify the OCD. Upon questioning a family member of the deceased, the aunt was able to verify that the individual in fact had OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder). In another instance, Lee gave the name of an entity who wanted to say hello to his aunt. The aunt did not recognize the name. Later, she found out from the family of another friend that this was, in fact, her friend's name, and that the name by which the aunt knew her had been a nickname.

Lee feels ambivalently about his mediumistic abilities as some of his peers have rejected him as a result. He openly discusses it with like-minded individuals but is reticent to share his experiences with most people. Partially because of this rejection and partially because of his developing understanding of Spiritualism, he has chosen not to continue attending the church in which he grew up.

Kayla and Angels

She is accustomed to having the world reach out to her, and she touches back. People address her directly and she tells them things. She's been able to speak clearly and in sentences since she was about fourteen months old. She's in the top 98th percentile for height and weight, so when people hear her and see how she observes things, people assume she's older. If we're in a store and she hears a crying baby, she takes us off of our path to go and sooth the baby. She pushes the mother or father aside and touches the baby's face and says, "Don't cry baby." And then she hugs and kisses them. This usually takes everyone by such surprise that the baby stops crying and the parents are completely stunned. She'll walk up to anyone who is having a bad day and comforts them. She feels no barriers. But, when she sees someone who makes her feel uncomfortable, she says, No momma, let's go. She won't even acknowledge someone who is making her feel uncomfortable except to look at them and all their koochie kooing and scream, "Go away! I'm not talking to you!"

Kayla talks a lot about angels. It's partly due to my cross country trip with her to Chicago (we were driving to Nova Scotia, but the bad weather kept pushing us down and away. We stopped at every cemetery to do a photo shoot for a book I'd been doing. The book was about Masonic symbolism in turn of the century funerary art. She fell in love with the angels and would ask a little bit more about them every day. She'd said she knew some angels, but hers were different colors. She always calls her yellow angels when she's scared. Then, there's her blue angels who seem to be just around. And her pink angels when she's happy, they seem to follow us places when we go out.

There was a day when Kayla and I were supposed to go out on a rainy day. She'd been looking forward to getting out, but changed her mind at the last minute. She said, "Let's stay home momma, it's better this way." Sometimes she just says things, and I just roll with it. Sometimes she gets really upset if I don't. We live on a dangerous two-lane highway and that day, at precisely the time we would have been there, there was a double fatality head on collision that kept the road closed for the rest of the day. I asked her why she decided we shouldn't go. She just shrugged, I've learned that the shrugging means that there's usually angel discussion involved. She seems to like to keep those conversations private.

Angels in the Bible

The Bible is resplendent with examples of the sighting of angels. Here are just a few examples.

Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?
Hebrews 1:14

Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. *Hebrews 13:2*

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. *Luke 2:9*

One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" *Acts 10:3*

Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. *Acts 12:7*

Conclusion

Children are born naturally spiritually awake and aware and if this awareness were encouraged throughout life, we might be able to rewrite the theories of psychologists who say that we first find ourselves and then we find God. As adults grow older, they tend to turn back to religion. If their spirituality had been retained and encouraged as a child, there might be no need for priests and ministers to struggle to bring them back "to the fold." Unfortunately, most religions go right up close to the notion of Spirit in the abstract and then

shrink back, pointing skeptical fingers at those who go even closer and embrace the gifts of the Spirit. These gifts are identified in I Corinthians 12: 8-13.

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; **to another discerning of spirits**; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

This being the *Association for the Scientific Study of Religion*, you might be asking, "Where is the science in this? Do you really expect us to believe that mediumship proves the ability to discern spirits?" The scientific process tells us that first we must identify a problem and its theoretical or philosophical base and then create a hypothesis. Look around at society's ills and its lack of interconnectedness and you will find the problem. Spiritualism is the theoretical and philosophical base for this work. Next, identification of the elements of a problem under scientific investigation are unearthed through reviews of the extant literature and through qualitative research. We present the literature reviewed herein and the various case studies and parent comments included as our first attempt at identifying the problem of the devolution of children's naturally spiritually aware connection with God. Our hypothesis is that encouraging young children to discern Spirit happens best when we retain the state of their being naturally spiritually awake and aware. Our intention is to open this as a new research track; we invite others to verify or disqualify our premises. We plan to continue this research track in an effort to identify strategies to help people understand that we all come into this world fully connected to God and fully connected to one another. Many religions have as their goal the restoration of mankind to God and his fellow human beings. Our primary goal is to help parents and caregivers learn ways to help children maintain the naturally spiritually awake and aware part of themselves that they arrive with when they emerge onto this planet, making obsolete the need for restoration.

Biographical Information

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Appendix A

Paranormal Development Questionnaire

Demographics: Please fill out the following demographic information. When we report these data, they will be reported as group data or as a case history with a pseudonym. No one will be able to identify you from the data.

Is this questionnaire about the interviewee or the interviewee’s family member?

Interviewee _____ Age: _____

Interviewee’s **family member (FM)** _____ Age: _____

Relationship to the family member (if not reporting on self):

I am related to the person I am reporting on because I am his/her:

_____ *mother, father, sister, brother, step-parent, guardian, grandmother, grandfather*

Person Being Reported On:

Gender: _____ Present Occupation: _____

Present Area of Residence: _____ urban core, urban fringe, suburban, rural

Educational Attainment:

Last school year attended _____ Bachelor’s degree _____
High school graduate or GED _____ Master’s degree _____
Voc Technical training _____ Doctoral/Professional degree _____
Some college/Associate degree _____ Other _____

Race/Ethnicity: (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

- ____ White alone ____ Hispanic or Latino ____ Other Hispanic or Latino
- ____ Black or African American alone not Hispanic or Latino
- ____ Asian alone not Hispanic or Latino
- ____ Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone not Hispanic or Latino
- ____ American Indian and Alaska Native alone not Hispanic or Latino
- ____ Black or African American *and* White not Hispanic or Latino
- ____ Asian *and* White not Hispanic or Latino
- ____ American Indian and Alaska Native *and* White not Hispanic or Latino
- ____ Amer Indian and Alaska Native *and* Black or African American not Hispanic or Latino
- ____ Balance of individuals reporting more than one race not Hispanic or Latino plus individuals reporting some other race not Hispanic or Latino

Research Data - “There are many terms that describe the experiences that some individuals have that are above and beyond those normally ascribed to the five senses. They include psychic, clairvoyance, clairaudience, clairsentience, prescient ability, precognitive dreaming, gnosis, mediumistic ability, Indigo Child, Empath, Star Child and spiritual sensitivity among others. For purposes of this questionnaire, we use the term “paranormal” as an all-encompassing term for these kinds of experiences.” *It is OK to say “I do not know” to any of these questions.*

1. Would you explain yourself/your FM as: (circle one) *occasionally, frequently or extensively* paranormal
2. At what age do you/your FM first recall having a paranormal experience? _____
3. At what age do you/your FM first recall becoming aware that this/these event(s) was/were not in the experience(s) of most people? _____
4. How did you become aware that you/your FM had paranormal abilities? _____

5. What did you/your FM do that made you/him/her aware that you/he/she had a spiritual connection? HOW DID YOU KNOW? Describe that experience please.
6. What did you do (yourself/with your FM) to help you discern if he/she has spiritual awakenings/gifts?
7. How did you/your FM react to learning that this/these was/were not in the experience(s) of most people?
8. How did you/your FM and other family members respond to this information?
9. What other stumbling blocks did you run up against? (family opinion, outsider's opinions, lack of available information,)
10. Were/was your FM comfortable talking to others about these experiences? If not, why not?
11. How did this paranormal ability influence you/your FM during your preschool years? (*probe for relations with others, social-emotional development, influence on schooling, influence on overall family constellation, etc.*)
12. How did this paranormal ability influence you/your FM during the elementary school years?
13. How did this influence you/your FM during the middle school years?
14. How did this influence you/your FM during the high school years?
15. How did this influence you/your FM during young adulthood?
16. How did this influence you/your FM during adulthood?
17. Where did you go and what resources did you use to find out about your/your FM's paranormal experiences? Please give several examples of how this plays out in your/your FM's life today.
18. As you/your FM was/were growing up, did you struggle with the knowledge that you/your FM had paranormal abilities? If so, in what ways?
19. As you/your FM was/were growing up, what instances do you recall that provided you with support? These can be spiritual, social, educational, or any other experiences.
20. Please explain what kinds of supports would have been helpful to you/your FM during the early developmental years.
21. Please explain what kinds of supports would have been helpful to you/your FM during the school years.
22. Please explain what kinds of supports would have been helpful to you/your FM during the adult years.
23. What kinds of things did you do as a parent to help your child connect? If reporting on yourself, what kind of things could your parents have done to help you connect??

23. Tips and hints for helping this child or any child develop his/her spiritual gifts?
24. Is there anything else you would like others to know about what it was like growing up as an individual who has paranormal experience/raising a child who has paranormal experiences?
Please use the back of this sheet or add additional pages to elaborate any answers.

Thank you kindly for being so generous with your time.

**Please fax to 405-691-4710, email to spirituallyawarechild@gmail.com or mail to P J Stice, 2416 SW 125th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73170-4833. Phone 405-691-9202
We can email you this questionnaire so you can type your responses and email back to our office.**

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The Christian Remnant: White Racism and the Case for Biblical Separatism

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Abstract

Christian Identity theology is the American version of British Israelism, a millenarian vision that the British were lineal descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. Over the years Christian Identity has been associated with underground movements and racist groups such as Aryan Nations and the Ku Klux Klan. Religious sects have formed with charismatic leaders such as Wesley Swift, Bertrand L. Comparet, and more recently Pastor Dan Gayman. Following the Oklahoma City bombing, journalist Joel Dyer uncovered connections between Christian extremists and fundamentalist Christian congregations throughout the nation's heartland. The continuing debate among a segment of the American population over Barack Obama's religious affiliation may result in more radical interpretations of the Bible along with coalitions among mainstream, fundamentalist, and extremist Christian groups. This paper presents an analysis of Gayman's ideas regarding race and salvation. I present his argument for biblical separatism based on his belief that only Whites are redeemable in the eyes of God. I discuss how these ideas impact contemporary extremist religious thought on forums such as Stormfront.org, an online community of self-identified White nationalists.

Introduction

Christian Identity (CI) beliefs have long been debated by religious and other scholars who study extremist activity in contemporary societies such as the United States. Regarded as an aberration of mainstream Christianity, some scholars argue that CI is the glue that holds the reactionary movement known as the White supremacist movement together (Berlet and Vysotsky 2006). Christian Identity also has the distinction of being the American version of British Israelism, the nineteenth century belief that British people were lineal descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel (Barkun 1994). Buttressed by the work of Englishman Edward Hine who focused exclusively on the idea that the British were God's only chosen people, the millenarian vision grew and gained popular support in Europe. Eventually Hine made it to America in hopes of mobilizing a full-fledged social movement in a country where the Anglo-Saxon core had established itself as the dominant cultural identity for whites of Northern European descent. He found a friend in Lt. Charles A. L. Totten who was a Professor of Military Science and Tactics at Yale. Professor Totten was widely known for his prophetic interpretations of biblical scriptures based on mathematical deductions. Totten's apocalyptic vision of the end of the world fit nicely with Hine's millenarian interpretation of the future and the ultimate victory of God's warriors who just happened to be "White Aryans" from Northern Europe. Boston publisher, A. A. Beauchamp, already known for publishing religious tracts, eventually carried on the printed legacy initially lay down by Hine and Totten during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's.¹ British Israelism found a home in the Northeast, Midwest, and Western regions of the United States during this time. It was in California that the unlikely trio, William Pelley, Gerald L. K. Smith,

¹For a full historical account of the Christian Identity movement in the United States see Barkun's *Religion and the Racist Right*.

and Wesley A. Swift formulated Christian Identity theology and put a decidedly American spin on British Israelism. Their anti-Semitic views put them at odds with British Israelists who believed that Jews could gain salvation if they converted to Christianity. They also adhered to the Jewish conspiracy theory which made it impossible for this emerging branch of the movement to co-exist with any doctrine that gave Jews a chance at redemption. Bolstered by resurgence in Protestant fundamentalism, the protracted hatred of Blacks, and a millenarian view of their own, Christian Identity was born.

Strange as it may seem, Christian Identists still believe and continue to search for clues to the meaning of life according to racial formation. Some are closely affiliated with Klan groups, some are not. Some researchers consider Christian Identity to be a branch of the White supremacist movement (Berlet and Vysotsky 2006) and others consider it to be a movement all its own (Barkun 1994). This paper is a brief examination of the views of Dan Gayman who claims not to be Christian Identity but whose beliefs and ideas are so closely related to CI doctrine as to be almost indistinguishable. Perhaps a better term to describe Gayman is Christian separatist but that could also be applied to self-proclaimed Christian Identity ministers such as Eli James and his followers, the Shepherds of Zadok. After discussing Gayman's views and comparing them to Pastor James's definition of Christian Identity, I will discuss how extremist religious views are integrated into religious discussions on Stormfront.org, an online discussion forum for White nationalists.

Covenant People Unite

The extremist religious fringe has long been inhabited by characters as diverse as Fred Phelps of the Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kansas to former Silicon Valley entrepreneurs Carl Story and Vincent Bertollini. Phelps has a vendetta against homosexuals and Story and Bertollini have used their wealth to produce slick propaganda to promote Christian Identity ideology through their ministry, the 11th Hour Remnant Messenger. Although the Christian Identity movement is not very well organized and it appears to have broken into fragments represented by various and sundry churches and compounds, the ideology is entrenched in the broader White supremacist movement. Christian Identity adherents hate Jews whose line of descent is believed to be Satanic in origin. They also believe Whites are descended directly from Adam. According to CI lore, Jesus was not a Jew but rather a Hebrew from Galilee. He was also a direct descendant of Adam which, of course, makes him White according to CI dogma. For neo-Nazis, Jesus is the Aryan prince prominent in Hitler's belief system known as Positive Christianity.

The apparent isolation of extremist ministers such as Dan Gayman masks the influence racist beliefs have on both rank and file members of organized online communities such as Stormfront.org and marginalized rural Whites identified by Joel Dyer in his investigation of the emergent anti-government movement in America's heartland (1998). White racial activists and armchair racists alike hold deep convictions about keeping the bloodline pure (Ridgeway 1990). Diversity and multiculturalism along with the presence of non-Christian religions such as Islam pose real threats to a segment of our population that many people prefer to ignore. Social change brought on by the election of our first African American president and perceptions by segments of the population of uncontrolled immigration from Latin American countries is a clarion call for disgruntled Whites to look for ways to unite and find solace in racially segregated religious groups. If Christian Identity religious leaders can shape a new, less caustic message they hope to eventually attract marginalized Whites who believe they are losing ground on all fronts (Ostendorf 2001/2002). Although Dan Gayman may already be passé, his ideas are interwoven into the belief system of the racist right and his insistence that non-Whites cannot achieve salvation does not waver.

Gayman's Theology

Like many radical theologians before him, Dan Gayman is charismatic and a dynamic speaker. His views on race; however, are antithetical to mainstream Christianity. His theology of race centers on his interpretation of origins of different racial groups. In Gayman's view and in his teachings, non-Whites existed before Adam and even though they have a relationship with God they will never achieve salvation. As an Adamite, he believes that only Whites or Caucasians descended from Adam and Jesus Christ subsequently died to save White people. His theory suggests that since there are so many intractable differences between existing racial groups, the belief that humans descended from one common beginning is not possible (Schamber and Stroud 2000). Gayman's mantra is similar to that of other Christian Identity ministers: "Whites are superior to all other races and for this reason they alone will achieve salvation."

According to Gayman, the Bible was never written for anyone other than White people. He falls back on the standard Christian Identity statement that because non-Whites do not blush they cannot be descended from Adam. He also argues that there is no historical evidence that writers of the Bible acknowledged anything about Egyptians, Chinese, Hindus, Japanese, and dark-skinned people from countries on the continent of Africa. Gayman states that this fact is supported by historical accounts of the Adamic race and Israel in Bible scriptures. Gayman adopts the same argument supported by other Christian Identity ministers that any Judeo-Christian translation of the Bible is inaccurate and filled with myth and innuendo.

According to Gayman, the God of Adam created each racial group for a different purpose. Since Whites were created to shape civilization because of their racial superiority, they alone can achieve salvation and everlasting life. Non-Whites were created for permanent secondary or subordinate status and physical life only. In Gayman's theology, non-Whites do not have the depth of understanding or the intellect to accept a complex God with all his stipulations for a glorious afterlife. He believes that the propensity for religious practice is genetic and that Blacks are predisposed to occult religions such as voodoo. Any attempt by well meaning White clergymen to alter this inherent religious deformity is only temporary. Eventually Black people fall back into their trap of worshipping ancestral spirits and physical objects rather than the real God. Gayman supports his thesis by arguing that after 200 years of White missionary activity in Africa, the natives are still stuck in various forms of voodoo. He asks the question: "Do all races share in salvation?" For Gayman and his followers, the answer is a resounding "No."²

Passing the Mantle to Eli James

Among the flock of radicals who populate the racist right, a newcomer named Eli James has emerged. His web site has a clock that is ticking away to judgment day in December 2012. His followers are known as the Shepherds of Zadok and James is slowly gaining a following among rank and file White supremacists. James's theology centers on the idea that since Anglo-Saxons are the true descendants of ancient Israel they are God's holy warriors. Instead of Adam, James believes that Whites are descended from Jacob through Isaac and Rebecca. He also claims there are hundreds of Christian Identity congregations worldwide, with new ones forming on a daily basis. Literature on Christian Identity ideology does not support this statement.

² For a full explanation of Gayman's beliefs, his book, *Do All Races Share in Salvation?*, is available on his web site and can also be ordered through Christian Identity clearing houses such as Kingdom Identity Ministries in Harrison, Arkansas.

Christian Identity goes by many different names and includes the following: Kingdom Identity, the Jacob-Israel movement, Christian Israel, Israel Identity, Covenant Identity, Covenant Israel, British Israel, American Israel, Anglo-Saxon Israel, and Anglo-Israel. According to James, these variations indicate that Whites are connected with Israel and no other people including Jews can claim this distinction. Because only Whites are descended from the House of Israel, their claim to the true Israel of Biblical scripture is shared by all Identists no matter what they label their specific belief system. This alleged fact is based solely on written scriptures from the original Hebrew and Greek version of the Bible. According to Identists, these translations are the inspired word of God. Most Identists resist Judeo-Christian translations of the Bible such as the King James translation. They argue that translation into modern languages has resulted in misreading and misinterpretations of the holy word of God and the misconception that Jesus was a Jew. Identity theologians also reject the Talmud because they believe it is based on non-scriptural traditions of Jewish Rabbis. In CI circles, Judaism is considered an imposter religion that even Jesus supposedly rejected. The “tradition of the elders” is nothing more than a collection of commentaries that is irrelevant to scriptures contained in the holy Bible. Much contemporary mainstream Christianity is believed by Identists to be the equivalent to the “Great Apostasy” as prophesied in scriptures. Jews are thought to come from two non-Semitic lineages: 1) Sephardic Jews and 2) Ashkenazi Jews. As a result of this descent, the Jewish claim to Palestine is regarded by CI ministers such as Eli James and others in the White supremacist movement to be fraudulent. This is one of the reasons there is so much dissent among White supremacists regarding U. S. foreign policy regarding Israel. James’s version of Christian Identity diverges from Gayman’s theology on several major points. James denies the possibility that any races evolved directly from Adam. Instead he claims that the Bible is the “book of the generations of Adam” written exclusively for the White race. The language of this Bible forbids intermarriage or “race-mixing.” Whites have an obligation to practice their religion with that particular tenet in mind. He states that non-Whites can be Christians but they practice their own version of Christianity separate from White Christians. Clearly, both interpretations are problematic for mainstream Christian churches.

Christian Identity, White Supremacy, and Biblical Separatism

Christian Identity theologians use Biblical scripture to back up their ideas. They understand that their beliefs are unconventional and highly criticized by clergyman of all faiths. Many in their ranks also believe in the apocalyptic vision of the countdown of days that will supposedly come to fruition in December 2012. Specific doctrinal beliefs drive Christian Identity dogma such as YHVH of Yahweh is the only true and living God. This is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who is also the creator of all things. Evolution is not part of Christian Identity culture. God is believed to be White, male, and powerful. This idea serves to reinforce traditional ideas about gender and the places that women and men occupy within the family and the broader society.

For Christian Identity adherents, the Old and New Testaments are interchangeable and equally important. They believe the scriptures to be the strict word of God. They also believe that the words in the Bible were written exclusively for the children of Yahweh who just happen to be White people. Their covenant includes three distinct beings: 1) God the Father; 2) God the Son; and 3) God the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was used by God to identify the true children of Israel and since the Bible was written only for these people who were the direct descendants of a White God, they were ultimately the only people who would achieve salvation at the end of days.

Christian Identity dogma states that God chose a special race of people to be above all other people on the earth. Scriptures that are used to back up this claim are *Deuteronomy* 7:6 and *Amos* 3:2. This special group came from the seedline of Isaac and Jacob. The descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob comprise the twelve tribes selected to inherit the Kingdom of God. These tribes, White, Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, and kindred people are God's true, literal Children of Israel. Only the Aryan race fulfills every detail of Biblical Prophecy and world history concerning Israel according to CI beliefs.

Adam is believed to be the true father of the White race because he was made in the image of God and referred to as the Son of God in the Bible. Adamic man consists of body, soul, and spirit. This gives him a higher form of consciousness and distinguishes him from all the other races and of course, Adamic man is White. Because Christian Identity proponents believe Whites are the chosen race, they reject integration and embrace total separation of the races. Intermarriage is considered to be a satanic attempt to destroy the chosen seedline.³ Currently enlightened Whites who adhere to CI tenets are awaiting the return of their Savior. When this happens, all the tribes of Israel (Whites) will gather in the Promised Land that just happens to be America. According to Christian Identity interpretation of scriptures, North America is where God brought the seed of Israel to establish his Kingdom as a Christian nation.

Racial Purity and Religion on Stormfront.org

Even though Eli James suggests that there is a Christian Identity church on every corner, most social researchers who study the movement believe it is a fringe movement at best with relatively small numbers of members (Barkun 1994, Dobratz 2001, Ezekiel 2002). No one really knows how large or how small the broader White supremacist movement is. Barkun (1994) traced Christian Identity ideology through several time periods along with journalists such as James Ridgeway (1990). Following his research into the Oklahoma City bombing, journalist Joel Dyer (1998) found strands of Christian Identity infiltrating fundamentalist churches in the heartland. Gaining access to believers is difficult for social researchers due to a general distrust of academics in extremist circles. People who conduct ethnographic research are also sometimes reluctant to spend time exploring unpleasant ideologies such as Christian Identity. Nonetheless, it is this researcher's opinion that the more we can find out about people who preach the gospel of hate and the people who align with racist dogma the better we will be able, as a society, to cope with adversity brought on by unconventional belief systems.

One of the most accessible forums for learning about racist thought has been is an online web site called Stormfront.org. The site was the first of its kind dedicated to discussions by people who embrace segregation and racial separatism. It was founded in 1995 by Don Black who still oversees the online community that has over 23,000 active members. The goal of Black and his web masters was to create a community where people who self-identify as White nationalists can go to share ideas and vent frustrations. They may also get dating tips, exchange recipes, and disseminate information about upcoming events, rallies, and White supremacist conferences. The theology forum, dedicated to religious discussions, was closed to non-members in 2008. In December 2007 I archived several threads from this forum which I will use in my analysis.

³ The scriptures cited as upholding this idea are *Exodus* 34:14-16; *Numbers* 24:1-13, I *Corinthians* 10:8; *Revelation* 2:14; *Deuteronomy* 7:3-4; *Joshua* 23:12-13; I *Kings* 11:1-3; *Ezra* 9:2, 10-12: 10:10-14; *Nehemiah* 10:28-30, 13:3, 27; *Hosea* 5:7; and *Malachi* 2:11-12.

Data and Methods

According to Brem (2002) analysis of online discussions can be a valuable tool for researchers. As was mentioned earlier, Stormfront is a discussion forum for White nationalists that went online in 1995. Don Black, the founder of Stormfront, is assisted by moderators, some of whom have been with the discussion board since its inception. New Stormfront discussants are briefed in Guidelines for Posting regarding accessibility of their posts to outside sources. The reality, however, is that discussants may not realize that conversations within the online community may be made public. With this in mind, discussants in this analysis are identified by number of post rather than by name or pseudonym. This decision was based on the human tendency to feel anonymous while interacting in cyberspace. There were a total of 200 individuals who participated in the forums selected for this analysis. The discussion postings began on November 11, 2004 and ended on December 30, 2006.

Data collected for this paper includes three discussion forums that deal specifically with religion. I utilized a search tool in Stormfront.org to locate specific discussion threads within the Theology forum. Search terms that were used in this analysis include: 1) Christian Identity; 2) traditional Christianity; and 3) paganism. The names of discussion topics chosen for this analysis are: 1) What turns Christian White Nationalists away from C.I.?; 2) Jesus was only half Jewish (at the most); and 3) How did you come to Paganism?. Threads that had more than ten posts ensured sufficient data for analysis. Within the three forums, a total of 40 threads are represented.

Analysis of the archived data began on January 15, 2009 and ended on February 1, 2009. The archived discussion forums were stored as rich text formatted documents on a flash drive. Nvivo, a computer software program designed to aid users in handling non-numerical and unstructured data, was used to help analyze the data. Nvivo is the updated version of NUD*IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data*Indexing Searching and Theorizing software). Nvivo looks for keywords and text that pertains to specific research questions. After searching for the keyword, Nvivo generates a node report which lists the sentences in which the keyword appears. Relevant text is automatically coded in a separate document and a printout of coded data is generated in a report format which serves as raw data. Files, images, or other data that might have restrictions based on membership were not collected and the researchers are not registered members of the Stormfront online community. After rich text documents were uploaded into the Nvivo software program, reports were read and analyzed based upon research questions. Secondary analysis of the data followed a method of categorization into coherent classes that were mutually exclusive and exhaustive, again based upon specific research questions.

Analysis of Stormfront.org Discussions about Religion

As was mentioned earlier, the Theology Forum on Stormfront.org is now closed to the public. In order to participate in the forum, a member must be cleared by a moderator and have contributed a small fee for forum expenses. A password is required to access the forum. Fortunately, I was able to archive several of the discussion threads that appeared on the forum prior to its closure to the public. I am not sure why the Theology Forum was made private; my guess is that some of the posts may have left the web site vulnerable to more intense scrutiny than Don Black is comfortable with. Having perused the site during the year that I was writing my dissertation, the Theology Forum generated many virulently racist comments based on the pseudoscience of notable White supremacists such as J. Philippe Rushton and Michael Levin. Both men are academics who have published their work in

scholarly journals. With that said, the archived data will have to suffice and it is probably not much different from what discussants are currently posting in the restricted site. I had several questions relating to Christian Identity ideology and how it permeates the thought of people who affiliate with the online White nationalist community represented by Stormfront.org. I formulated these questions prior to when I archived the initial Theology data in hopes of writing a paper about it someday. My first question dealt with what religious perspective (if any) Stormfront discussants identify with. Within the context of this question, I wanted to know if Christian Identity is an acceptable alternative to more traditional Christian religious perspectives for Stormfront discussants. In view of the fact that Stormfront discussants are overwhelmingly anti-Semitic, I wanted to know how they rationalize the fact that Jesus was a Jew. Do they deal with that Biblical fact in the same way that CI adherents do – denial? Finally, I wanted to know how Stormfront discussants feel about paganism and if this is a more reasonable religious alternative than Christian Identity.

How do Stormfront.org discussants feel about Christian Identity?

Even though an occasional Stormfront discussant denies that race is the foremost issue that drives participation in the online community, most members admit that they are racist. J. Philippe Rushton, a Canadian psychology professor, hypothesizes that race is a biological concept with Asians and Africans aggregating at opposite ends of the spectrum; Asians are at the top of the hierarchy and Africans are at the bottom (1995). With Rushton at its helm, a new eugenics movement has resurged in both Canada and the United States and Stormfront is a haven for many of the hereditarian ideas espoused by Arthur Jensen, Hans Eysenck, and Richard Lynn in addition to Rushton. Trying to justify traditional Christianity and racist beliefs is difficult for most people (even for some Stormfront discussants).

I haven't fully investigated CI, but I was turned away on my first exposure. I do not believe that our Identity has any supernatural qualities....I am favorable to the term "identity" over race as I believe anyone with the power of reason can be converted to true Christianity with the proper teaching. For example, a Chinese Buddhist can become a Chinese Christian. Obviously he will not become White but my understanding is that he will benefit by becoming Christian. That's how I differ from CI people. They think only White people can be Christians. (Post 25, <http://www.stormfront.org/foru/showthread.php?t=164674>)

Over the years I have heard various arguments for CI, some contradicted one another, some seemed to stretch history (without proof) to fit their arguments, some clearly misused some portions of Scripture, and a great many of those who I have dealt with who were CI were very hateful and demeaning towards those who were not CI, even when non-CI Whites were respectfully asking question to learn about CI. With that said, I don't mean to tar all CI as those above. My observations simply fit the majority of CI I have come in contact with....I am happy to say that I have seen some CI posts here from folks who actually present themselves well and seem to clearly understand their beliefs and the foundations of their beliefs. (Post 4, <http://www.stormfront.org/foru/showthread.php?t=164674>)

The post elicited the following response:

There is something else to consider and that is religious differences still exist between different faiths and that cannot be avoided. I have been labeled as CI when in fact I am old time gospel Baptist. It is true that I do not always agree with CI on issues of scripture and the interpretation thereof, however, we agree on the basic racial

message that the bible imparts to us and the understanding that the Jew and its seed are of the devil. As for who is Israel, well we are. (Post 5, <http://www.stormfront.org/foru/showthread.php?t=164674>)

Was Jesus Christ a Jew?

Christian Identity ministers and their followers adamantly oppose the idea that Jesus Christ was Jewish. They reinterpret scripture to support their claims that he was a Hebrew from Galilee who was directly descended from Adam. The following posts began the discussion thread titled “Jesus was only half Jewish (at the most).”

If Jesus was born as a consequence of the union between God and Mary, how could he be fully jewish? God himself has no race so I assume that a melding with his genetic qualities would not produce a pure-bred Jew...half jewish at most. (Post 1, <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/showthread.php?t=348484>)

As far as Jesus, I don't really see how his “Jewishness” is really relevant. He essentially thumbed his nose at the Khazar Pharisees. He told them that they were evil. His actions and speech pointed out what about them was evil. Nothing he did remotely resembles the aborant [*sic*] Jewish traits that insight justified anti-semitism. He did not practice usury, hold leverage to use the gentile, gather power to control a nation, infiltrate government, control information lines, relativize [*sic*] morality....He did none of these things. In fact, he stood in opposition to most of these things. If he was a Jew and his lineage appears to support this then we can all agree that he was ONE GOOD JEW. (Post 2, <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/showthread.php?t=348484>)

Mary and Joseph were both Semitic and Jewish, end of story. (Post 3, <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/showthread.php?t=348484>)

.....Jesus was not a Jew else his father was the devil! Mary was not a Jew. Mary and Joseph were from the House of David. Because Mary's cousin was a Levite says something about Mary's tribal affiliation. David was an Ephramite therefore the prophesy concerning both David and Jesus was fulfilled...ya just gotta laugh at folk who say Jesus was a Jew or even part thereof. He had no affiliation with Judah – read your Bible. [Post 5, <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/showthread.php?t=348484>).

Discussants debated this question for several pages of dialogue. An outsider entered the discussion with the following comment:

Jesus taught us through his actions of love for all, Christianity is a loving religion, and accepting of everyone as the Bible and the Vatican both tell us. It is a sin to attack people with so much hatred as there is on these forums. (Post 20, <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/showthread.php?t=348484>).

A regular discussant on the Stormfront site had this response:

I wouldn't say that the Vatican, being such a worldly organization itself, would be able to speak for Jesus Christ. They can quote his teachings...anything else would be pure speculation. If you are such a Jew lover, I suggest taking a wander over to HEEB.com magazine and brose the forums there to see what kind of filth is on there. (Post 21, <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/showthread.php?t=348484>).

This discussion thread ended with the following remark responding to the initial post.

An immaterial God has no genetic qualities whatsoever. Jesus' human nature is entirely derived from his mother, who was enabled to have a son without sexual involvement by a special act of divine grace. Satanic scribes have inserted the word Jew in many places in the Bible where the word Israel should be. They have added to and taken away from the word of God and their punishment is beyond imagination. (Post 60, <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/showthread.php?t=348484>).

Is paganism an acceptable religious alternative for Stormfront discussants?

Paganism causes problems among groups in the White supremacist movement. Christian Identity adherents and some traditional Klansmen believe that pagans worship a false God although alternative religious perspectives such as Odinism and Wotanism are becoming more popular with some of the younger activists in the movement (Dobratz 2001). This is causing a rift with some Klan groups, many of whom are closely aligned with Christian Identity beliefs. In his work with Klansmen and neo-Nazis, Raphael Ezekiel (1995) found that skinheads were drawn to the idea of Aryan descent from the gods as elaborated by Alfred Rosenberg in *Der Mythos des 20*. One of the recurrent themes that emerged in Ezekiel's study was the belief that God gathered Aryans in Canada and the United States to fulfill their destiny in the preparation for the second coming of Christ. It was almost as if the younger neo-Nazis were gravitating toward a proto-Nordic savior even though many of them considered themselves to be pagans rather than Christians.

Not all Stormfront discussants are comfortable with either traditional Christianity or Christian Identity. Since paganism appears to attract younger followers it seems reasonable that a segment of the Stormfront community (many of whom are young people) might find it appealing. A discussant started a thread dealing with this very question.

What is it exactly that attracted you to Paganism? How did you get onto your Pagan path? What religion were you raised in? (Post 1, <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/showthread.php?t=319659>).

The two people who converted me to National Socialism also happened to be Pagan. That and I love history. (Post 2, <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/showthread.php?t=319659>).

The mystery and allure behind it all is one aspect, there are many more that are just plain negative internal reactions to Christianity. I don't follow one particular path. I follow Wicca mostly but I like Stregheria (*sic*) also. The other paths interest me too but those are the main two. I was raised Roman Catholic/Judeo-Christian (I hate the term Judeo-Christian). I remember I nearly died when my religion teacher in the 6th and 7th grade said we are Judeo-Christians. I thought to myself, I am not a Jew, I'm Italian American and damn proud of it too. (Post 3, <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/showthread.php?t=319659>).

I came to paganism because I found worshipping a gay schizophrenic communist jewboy (*sic*) who got himself killed for telling the truth about jews, just wasn't very fulfilling and the resurrection story is so full of horse manure. Check out cosmotheism.net that's a great pagan religion. (Post 8, <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/showthread.php?t=319659>).

Discussion

Much has been written about Christian Identity and its place in the White supremacist movement in the United States. Dobratz (2001) found that even though religion is an important aspect of the movement, it can also be problematic because of its divisiveness. In view of the differences of opinion between CI theologians and Stormfront.org discussants, it appears that Christian Identity ideology is a single piece of a much larger puzzle. What appears to be happening (at least among some of the younger White racial activists) is a convergence of Christian Identity, eugenics, and paganism. What this means in terms of broader movement initiatives and mobilization efforts remains to be seen.

Wilmot Robertson⁴ wrote several books that are considered to classics in White supremacist literature. One of his theories posits that the first and foremost problem of Christianity is race. Robertson takes the position that there is no proof that Jesus was Jewish. He supports the ideas of Toynbee and Stewart Chamberlain who believed that Jews rejected Jesus and subsequently killed him (1981:259). This type of thinking is still evident throughout the Stormfront.org community even in forums that do not deal specifically with religion.

Even though many discussants on Stormfront.org appear to be inarticulate and lacking in formal education, some of the moderators and other heavy users are well read and their posts reflect good grammar and well constructed sentences. After perusing many different threads encased in various discussion forums, the focus for the moderates and better educated discussants is on lowering the racial volume and finding a religious tone that gets their point across without angering traditional Christians who may be sympathetic to some extremist ideas. By closing the Theology Forum to the public, Stormfront leadership now has an opportunity to regroup and come up with ways to further their agenda without alienating the bulk of their online community and possible future supporters.

What about radical religious ministers such as Gayman and James? Can they bridge the gap between extremist fundamentalist dogma and Stormfront rhetoric? Neither of the two showed up in any of the threads that are included in this study. Nor were their names ever mentioned. An Australian Covenant minister did show up on several threads. He claimed to be a Christian Identity minister but ended up in verbal tirades with several regular discussants about Hitler and the importance of Positive Christianity to the success of the contemporary National Socialist movement. At the end of the forum dealing with why White nationalists turn away from Christian Identity, he stated that Christian Identity is a calling from God to create a better society. He admitted that there is a lot of poor scholarship in CI doctrine; however, the thing no one should argue with is the fact that both Jesus and the ancient Israelites were Caucasian and Whites are the chosen people of God. He ended his remarks with the following statement:

We can't help it if we hear God's call and other White people don't. We carry the message to the lost and those who have given up hope. For those people who do enter CI fellowship, it is a new lease on life and that is why we are here on Stormfront(Post 85, <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/showthread.php?t=348484>).

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⁴ This name is a pseudonym.

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Mourning Religion: The Case of Donald Capps

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Introduction: Peter Homans's "mourning religion" thesis

Donald Capps is one of the most prolific and creative writers in the field of psychology of religion today.¹ He made his name in academia, though, in the field of pastoral care and counseling, as most of his monographs were written in this field. But he also wrote a few monographs in the psychology of religion (e.g., Capps, 1993, 1997a, 2000, 2002b). This essay is concerned with one of them, his psychobiographical book on Jesus (Capps, 2000), as I argue that the writing of this book enabled Capps to begin to transform his own melancholia into mourning.

This paper derives from a chapter in my dissertation—a chapter that is some 90 pages long. My presentation here, then, is exceedingly brief and partial. For those interested in this topic, a longer summary of the chapter will be published in *Pastoral Psychology*. In any case, in my dissertation I am looking at the relationship between personal experience and public theory within certain strands of contemporary psychology of religion and pastoral theology, and I use Peter Homans's notion of "mourning religion" to understand the relationship between a scholar's life and work (cf. Homans, 2000, 2008; Parsons, Jonte-Pace, & Henking, 2008).

In *The Ability to Mourn*, Homans (1989) argued that the creation of psychoanalysis was a cultural and symbolic act of mourning in response to the loss of religious, particularly Christian, meanings in western culture. In his analysis, Homans especially emphasized the social-historical aspects of mourning in light of secularization, and he argued for a three-fold process with regard to social and cultural mourning: 1) disillusionment and loss; 2) individuation and new self-understanding; and 3) creative response. "Some creative persons," Homans (2008) writes, "are capable of recognizing this loss for what it is and of letting go of it. Such an experience can in turn generate the discovery of something as yet unseen in the new and emerging situation. In the case of the culture maker, this creative work is the construction of what will later become the work" (p. 18). In the academic setting, once this work is completed and legitimated, it often becomes institutionalized. Homans finds the case of Freud as a culture maker especially suited for his argument, for Freud's life was filled with loss and creativity. As Homans points out, Freud (2001/1900) himself noted that *The Interpretation of Dreams* "has a further subjective significance for me personally—a significance which I only grasped after I had completed it. It was, I found, a

¹ Donald Eric Capps was born on January 30, 1939 to Holden and Mildred Capps, and he had three siblings: Walter, Roger, and Douglas. He married Karen Virginia Docken on August 22, 1964, and they had their only child John Michael Capps on July 19, 1970. He was ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on June 5, 1972. He received his B. A. (he majored in both English and Philosophy) from Lewis and Clark College in 1960; a B. D. from Yale Divinity School in 1963; a S. T. M. from Yale Divinity School in 1965; a M. A. from the University of Chicago in 1966; a Ph. D. from the University of Chicago in 1970; and an honorary Th. D. from the University of Uppsala in 1989. Capps took an Instructor position in the Department of Religious Studies at Oregon State University in the spring and summer of 1969, and he returned to the University of Chicago the following fall to take an Assistant Professor position. He taught at Chicago from 1969-1974. From Chicago, Capps moved to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where he taught for two years, 1974-1976, as Associate Professor. Then Capps took an Associate Professor position at the Graduate Seminary of Phillips University. Capps taught at Phillips from 1976 to 1981, and from here he moved onto Princeton Theological Seminary as full professor, where he stayed until his retirement in 2009.

portion of my own self-analysis, my reaction to my father's death—that is to say, to the most important event, the most poignant loss, of a man's life" (p. xxvi). William Parsons (2008) has extended Homans's theory to focus on contemporary academics, by looking at, for example, comparativist Jeffrey Kripal's Roman Catholic background and his current research.

In this paper, I use the "mourning religion" thesis to understand the relationship between Capps's life and work. Specifically, I note one loss that Capps experienced in his childhood that involved religion (stage one of Homans's theory), that he directly confronted his ambiguous relationship with religion in his fifties by writing about melancholia (stage two of Homans's theory), that he responded creatively in light of his new self understanding by introducing an original religious topology for men (stage three of Homans's theory), and, as noted, that the key moment in transforming his melancholia into mourning was when he applied his male melancholia theory to Jesus. Capps's creative response continues to this day, especially as he continues to write about humor. I will proceed by first summarizing Capps's male melancholia theory—the chief creation of Capps's mourning of religion—and then I will move on to explore how Homans's theory is relevant for understanding Capps's male melancholia theory, especially in light of Capps's book on Jesus.

Capps's male melancholia theory

Capps (2002b) argues that men—all men—become religious in the sense that he defines, which will be described here, on account of their separation from their mothers, usually between the ages of three to five. Capps, then, is disclosing here that *he* is religious in this sense, that his religion, as all men's religion, is related to the loss of mother. When Capps (1997a) first put forth his theory, he did not write autobiographically, but he did make a personal comment to confirm what any reader would suspect: "I have profited from many personal conversations in recent years with students and colleagues on the topic of this book, but those that especially stand out in my mind are ones I had with John Capps [Capps's son], who sensed by the rather serious tone of our conversations that the topic of melancholy has for me a personal subtext, which mercifully remained, for the most part, unspoken but understood" (pp. xii-xiii).

What is male melancholia? Capps defines male melancholia as a form of religiousness that, as noted, emerges in men's early childhood through their relationship to their mothers. When boys emotionally separate from their mothers (normally between ages three and five), they acquire an ambivalent attitude towards their mothers because, even though, or precisely because, she is still around, things are not the same. "Why has mother abandoned me?" the boy asks himself. He also wonders, "Can this loss be reversed? And, if so, what can I do to reverse it?" "[T]he very ambiguity of this situation," Capps (2004) writes, "and the anxieties that such ambiguity promotes are of key importance to the emotional separation that occurs between a small boy and his mother, and this separation is reflected in the form and style of men's religious proclivities" (p. 108). Capps suggests that male religiousness takes three forms, which are all directly related to the boy's separation from his mother. The first of men's religious proclivities is the religion of honor. By being a "good boy," men attempt to "win" their mothers back, perhaps by doing well in school, by earning a lot of money, or by achieving remarkable social standing. The second main proclivity is the religion of hope, and here men attempt to find a replacement for their mothers by finding someone like her or something to replace her. Here men might take interest in literal quests, such as traveling, or the quests can be of a more symbolic nature. The third religious proclivity, which Capps (2002b) added in his *Men and Their Religion: Honor, Hope, and Humor*, is the religion of humor. This way of being religious asks, "Can one really win mother back, and can one really find a replacement?" It may also ask, "And why would one *want* to win mother back?" The religions of honor and hope may have their successes, but they have their defeats and disappointments as well, and one way that a man might cope with

the latter is to develop a humorous attitude toward the first two ways of being religious. Here men make light of the commitments and efforts that they engender, and by doing so, they save themselves from bitterness and despair. The religion of humor accepts the reality of the loss, yet refuses to be defeated by this loss. If male melancholia has no cure, Capps suggests that humor is a pretty good antibiotic, and the religion of humor aids in reclaiming the religions of honor and hope in a chastened and relativized form.

Capps, as noted, applied an early version of this theory to Jesus, and I argue that this application, along with his continual development and application of the theory, has been instrumental in addressing his own melancholia, especially as it has enabled Capps to take a humorous outlook on life. To demonstrate this thesis, I will now turn to the application of Homans theory.

One religious loss in childhood (Stage one of Homans's theory)

When Capps was eleven or twelve, he had an experience that could have led to a profound religious disillusionment. The context was Sunday school class. The teacher, who also happened to be a friend of Capps's parents, was a man who "was very much into biblical prophecies" (Dykstra, Cole, and Capps, 2007, p. 143). According to his calculations, the end of the world was going to happen that year, and he told the Sunday school class this. Capps writes: "He would tell us what a glorious event it would be when Jesus came in clouds of glory and, after a brief battle with Satan and his armed forces, the present world would end and a new world would replace it" (p. 143). Capps was both anxious and excited about the impending apocalypse. Capps says that he doesn't remember talking with anyone about this—not his classmates, his brothers, or his parents. He adds, "If I talked with anyone about it, this would have almost certainly have been my mother, and I doubt that she would have cast doubt on the teacher's prophecy" (p. 143).

The day that the teacher preached came and went and, of course, nothing happened. The following Sunday the teacher apologized for the miscalculation, and, as Capps recalls, no one made a big deal out of the mistake. While Capps could have become disillusioned with religion, he writes, "I became more determined to lead a life that was pleasing to Jesus and the heavenly Father" (p. 144). Capps writes of himself: "Thus, the beneficiary of the failed prophecy was the religion of honor, its focus having expanded from working hard to win my mother's approval and admiration to proving myself worthy of Jesus and his Father in heaven" (p. 144). He continues, "If the experience did not lead to disillusionment, it created wariness with regard to the religious imaginations of others. Also, although my own religious attitude remained solemn and serious, a light irony began to play about its edges, and this is where my very human father became significant" (p. 145). This experience, while it did not lead to disillusionment, was nevertheless a kind of religious loss. There were, to be sure, other such losses, but time permits only talk of one. My only point here is to demonstrate that, at a very early age, Capps found that religion was not what he had thought it to be. He experienced, in other words, a partial and ambiguous religious loss (cf. Boss, 1999)—a loss that he would continue to struggle with in his professional career.

Individuation in Capps's psychobiography of Jesus: Integrating the personal, the psychological, and the pastoral selves (Stage two of Homans's theory)

In "The Letting Loose of Hope," Capps (1997c) noted that, at various points in his career, he has felt a tension between his pastoral care identity and his psychology of religion identity (cf. Capps, 1997b). His psychology of religion side is "ambitious," "iconoclastic," "anti-traditional," and "the source of novel ideas," whereas his pastoral care self "reflects the self committed to values and ideals" and is "more responsible and mature," "devoted to being

genuinely helpful,” “more prudent and cautious,” and “values tradition” (Capps, 1997c, p. 139). The tension, in Capps’s own words, is between the psychological and the pastoral. This tension—a creative tension, to be sure—is also reflected in Capps’s psychobiography of Jesus. I suggest that the two were able to make their peace by working together to make a coherent portrait of Jesus. A third self is evident in his portrait as well, which I simply call the “personal.” His “psychological” and “pastoral” selves are, of course, personal as well, but what I mean by personal are influences from his experience, especially his childhood, that are, in some sense, more fundamental than his vocational selves.

In terms of the “mourning religion” thesis, by writing this book Capps was able to respond to previous religious losses by individuating himself from the unreliable religion of his childhood and he created new religious meaning by interpreting Jesus in a way that helped him establish a faith that was uniquely his own (cf. Capps, 2007). In my dissertation, I engage Capps’s (2000) portrait of Jesus in a more sustained way, but here I only want to make a couple of points with regard to individuation and integration.² My point here is simply to demonstrate, however briefly, the personal quality of Capps’s portrait of Jesus and to suggest that this personal portrait served the psychological needs of the portraitist himself.

The personal: In search of a more reliable truth. The place to begin in looking for the personal motivations for Capps’s psychobiography is the dedication of the book. The book is dedicated to himself. After noting that, as a boy, his favorite Bible verse was John 14.6, Capps writes, “In the course of writing this book, I was mindful of the desire to keep faith with this boy and have done so, I believe, by striving to write a study of Jesus that was not afraid to ask questions in search of a more reliable truth. This book is dedicated to him” (p. xiii). The fact that Capps feels that he needs to search for a more reliable truth suggests that, at one point or another, Capps found some religious claims to be *unreliable*. This, as we have seen, was precisely the case when Capps discovered that his teacher’s prediction about the end of the world was unreliable. The fact that Capps suspects what he has been taught about Jesus may also be unreliable reflects the depth of his questioning. Indeed, for Christians, questions regarding Jesus are foundational, which is why I believe the writing of this monograph reflects a turning point in Capps’s mourning process. Capps has written the book, then, for personal reasons, reasons that are religious. He is in search of a more reliable truth, a truth that won’t suffer the same fate as his teacher’s false prophecy.

One can observe specific passages in Capps’s psychobiography that are interpretations only he could make, likely because of his own experiences with his mother. In searching for a psychological explanation for the healing of a possessed boy (Mark 9.14-29), Capps makes speculations that are related to the theme of mother:

While the unconscious motivation behind such self-destructive acts cannot be explained on the basis of the presented facts, we may surmise (on the basis of Freud’s anxiety theory) that these acts internalize a desire to inflict punishments on someone else, quite possibly his mother. (p. 174)

Capps continues: “If I were to hazard a guess, I would say that the boy’s mother beat him unmercifully, as prescribed by Proverbs 23.13: ‘Do not withhold discipline from your children; if you beat them with a rod, they will not die,’ and Proverbs 29.15, ‘The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a mother is disgraced by a neglected child’” (p. 175). If this were the case, then, Capps writes, the symptoms “reflect his internalization of rage against his mother, a rage that he dares not act upon (e.g., by hitting back), but instead acts out in the form of episodes involving falling into fire and water” (p. 175). His speculation is perfectly reasonable, but one could also have made other speculations, surmises not based on the mother theme. One could argue that Capps is making such surmises on the basis of his own theory of male melancholia, that, in other words, there is nothing especially personal about his speculations.

² For a summary of Capps’s book on Jesus, see Capps (2002a).

But such an argument overlooks the fact that his male melancholia theory is a theory that has, as he himself has noted, a personal subtext for him (cf. Capps, 1997a).

The psychological: The theme of reversals. Another major component of Capps's portrait of Jesus deals with how Jesus healed. This is perhaps the most controversial chapter of Capps's argument, as he offers psychological explanations for what many religious believers consider to be miracles (in the supernatural sense). Capps assumes a naturalist framework, and so, faithful to his presuppositions, he reads the stories of Jesus' healings through this framework. Capps realizes that such an interpretation could be considered reductionistic, and that religious believers could take offense at his efforts. But, regarding the latter, Capps points out that it is harder to cure medical problems that have a psychological origin than it is to cure medical problems that are simply physical. In no way, Capps suggests, are Jesus' healing powers diminished by viewing them in light of psychological explanations. But Capps realizes, of course, that such assurances will not ease some religious believers.

The theme of reversals is especially prominent in his chapter on the healings of Jesus. Capps employs his reversals here by noting Freud's view that "a fundamental feature of monotheistic religion is that God is subject to image-splitting, with the split off image becoming Satan" (p. 178). In the case of Jesus, Capps believes that the splitting of the God image entailed an image of God as Abba and Beelzebub. In psychoanalytic thought, in demon possession there is a disowned aggression. Capps writes, "The disowned aggression, however, is turned inward, against the self, and becomes self-punitive, that is, one 'suffers' from the demon possession itself" (p. 182). What Jesus does in his healings, Capps argues, is *reverse* "the process of relinquishing one's aggression to the evil spirit, employing the aggression *against* the evil spirit, thus legitimating [the] aggression" (p. 182). Capps suggests that "Jesus found such image-splitting unusually convincing because he did not know his natural father and was not adopted by Joseph, and therefore had little if any experience of paternal love" (p. 182). Capps continues: "Each time he commanded Beelzebub to leave another young man alone, and the command worked, he avenged his own victimization at the hands of human fathers" (p. 182).

Capps argues that Jesus was able to heal because of his words on the basis of Freud's belief that words were originally magic, that words today still retain much of their ancient power. Jesus "seems to have understood the psychological potency of the word itself, attributable to its association with the period in life when words *are* magic due to their uncanny reversibility" (p. 192). Capps continues, "[T]here was, indeed, an element of magic in Jesus' exorcisms, based on the fact that, for children, words *were* originally magic, especially those that involved reversal of sound" (p. 192). The magic word, for Jesus, was Abba, which, of course, is the same word read from left to right or from right to left. This reversible word, Capps argues, allowed Jesus to reverse the aggression of young men that was self-directed because Jesus was able to convince the men to direct their aggression toward Beelzebub.

By offering such a creative, systematic, and even reductionistic interpretation of the healings of Jesus, Capps was able to honor his psychology of religion self when the stakes were the highest for a Christian. In other words, if, as a psychologist of religion, Capps made reductionistic interpretations of other religions or only minor figures of his own religion, it would seem that his work would lack a certain courage or authenticity, much like when biblical scholars assume and defend the historical-critical method but then say nothing about or, even worse, defend the doctrine of the virgin birth. But, as it were, Capps *did* have the courage to be consistent in his methodology while applying his psychological tools to Jesus.

The pastoral: The theme of restoration. I noted above that Capps stated that the reason for his writing was that he was in search of a more reliable truth. He could have kept his search to himself, but, in the act of publication, he sought to share his more reliable truth

with others, which suggests that his book is not merely a book in the psychology of religion—it is pastoral at its core as well. A major concern of Capps has been the destructive power of religion, but he has also maintained that religion can be a force for good as well (see, e.g., Capps, 1995). Misunderstanding Jesus, Capps argues, has led to a great deal of harm, especially when one focuses on what was done to Jesus (he was crucified), rather than on what he did (e.g., healing, disrupting the temple).

Capps's portrait, I suggest, has a pastoral emphasis. He writes: "Our portrait of Jesus thus concludes on the theme of faith, hardly a novel conclusion" (p. 262). Capps here is viewing faith as the opposite of anxiety, and he notes Jesus' inner calm when he was on the boat during a storm (Mark 4.37-40). Capps believes that this story would have been the perfect image to have of Jesus after the temple disturbance, for it would capture "the 'inner calm' of the man who had at last triumphed over reproachings without and within through this culminating act of healing. It is the inner act of self-exorcism. Dare one imagine that as he stood in the temple court, awaiting arrest, he raised his face to the heavens and said, "It is finished"? (p. 263). This suggestion—the suggestion that Jesus said "It is finished" with respect to the temple disturbance, rather than on the cross, is a kind of reversal (and restoration) that I believe is typical in certain strands of psychology of religion and pastoral theology, which I explore in my dissertation (cf. Pfister, 1948). And so Capps's suggestion is a critique of the Jesus of atonement theology, that the death of Jesus on the cross is salvific. Capps, instead, wants to focus on what Jesus did, not what was done to him. This is a radical reversal, but one that is also restorative.

From melancholia to mourning: Capps's creative turn to humor (Stage three of Homans's theory)

I suggest that Capps's creative response to his childhood frustrations with religion entailed, in terms of Homans's theory, his creation of his male melancholia theory. But it should be kept in mind that he developed the theory over time. At first he did not explicitly talk in terms of the typology of honor, hope, and humor. He talked only in terms of maternal loss, but the themes of honor and hope were implicit in his analysis. After writing his psychobiographical book on Jesus in which he applied his male melancholia theory to Jesus, he created the typologies of honor, hope, and humor. But even then the theme of humor was only addressed in a short concluding chapter (Capps, 2002b). Capps's creative response (stage three) did not occur all at once but rather over a number of years. Here I want to focus on his use of humor, which intimates Capps's transformation of melancholia into mourning.

As time went on, the subject of humor took on a larger role in Capps's writings. To date he has written two monographs on humor (Capps 2005a, 2008). His first book on humor (Capps, 2005a) is especially light-hearted. On the back of the book, for example, there are numerous fictional endorsements. Erasmus endorses the book saying: "Best book on religion and humor since my own groundbreaking book *In Praise of Folly!*" Luther follows with his endorsement: "Erasmus my assmus! His Dame Folly is all talk. Capps lets her rip! An enviable performance!" Capps also has an endorsement from Don Quixote, Capps's alter ego: "Sensible and down-to-earth. My kind of book." Capps (2005a) notes that "The idea that 'laughter is the best medicine' became a conviction of mine from an early age, but I didn't give this particular belief much thought as I entered adulthood" (p. 1)—more specifically, when Capps was in his sixties, which is a rather suggestive fact with regard to the timing of Capps's transformation.

Capps also has published articles on humor, and one of them is particularly relevant for his male melancholia theory, because this article deals with mother, specifically, the "bad-enough" mother. In this article, Capps (2005b) is making fun of Winnicott's often-cited notion of the "good-enough" mother. Capps writes, "Winnicott is entitled to his opinion of

what makes a 'good-enough mother,' but a mother who becomes less actively adaptive as time goes on isn't *my* idea of a 'good-enough mother'" (p. 289). For Capps, this would be a *bad-enough* mother! Capps, as noted, is being humorous here, but he is serious about his argument that "there is a 'bad-enough mother' subtext to every biblical story in which a man desires a woman" (p. 292).³ This article suggests to me that Capps was able to "lighten up" regarding male melancholia. Or, perhaps a better way of saying this is, Capps's turn to and utilization of humor was both reflective of and instrumental in a transformation of his mourning, especially because Capps (2005a) is talking about the *religion* of humor.

Conclusion: In search of a more reliable truth

To sum up, in terms of Homans's "mourning religion" thesis, Capps experienced an "ambiguous loss" (cf. Boss, 1999) with respect to religion, as reflected in his experience with his Sunday school teacher's failed prophecy. He didn't lose religion then, or become disillusioned with it, but religion was not what he had thought it was, and, in the future, he would take steps to make sure he wasn't duped again. By studying religion professionally he would find a more reliable truth. The ambiguous nature of his partial loss of religion is, I suggest, reflected in his two competing professional identities—namely, his pastoral care self and his psychology of religion self. His turn to humor was instrumental in and reflective of a transformation in his mourning process because humor allowed him to integrate these professional identities further than he had previously, particularly because humor has a subversive and iconoclastic aspect (which fit with his psychology of religion self) and a nurturing aspect (which fit with his pastoral care self). In support of the claim that humor was so instrumental for Capps is the fact that Capps himself argued that humor is the best remedy for male melancholia, which, as Capps argued, is an ambiguous loss that is the origin of male religiousness.⁴ By writing about humor and being humorous himself, Capps was able to make peace with the ambiguity of religion and the ambiguities within himself, for he had already sought for and found a more reliable truth in Jesus. While some, of course, will not be convinced by Capps's particular portrait of Jesus, perhaps because they look askance to psychoanalytic interpretations, I trust that the reader will be convinced by my argument of the personal significance—for him—of his portrait of Jesus, for, in his own words, his reason for writing was "to write a study of Jesus that was not afraid to ask questions *in search of a more reliable truth*" (Capps, 2000, p. xiii, my emphasis).

Autobiographical note

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³ Capps's inspiration for this humorous article was the work of Phyllis Tribble (1984) and Philip Culbertson (1992), both of whom work on "texts of terror," for women and men. Capps identified the story of Rebekah (Genesis 27) as an overlooked "text of terror" for men, as he suggested that Rebekah is a "bad-enough mother" both to Jacob and Esau.

⁴ It is interesting to note that both Homans and Capps have written psychoanalytically about loss and religion, and both have made great use of Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia." But while Homans is writing about mourning, Capps is writing about melancholia. Homans, I am told, became an atheist, but Capps has remained a religious believer. Perhaps one way of understanding the differences between Homans and Capps on loss and religion, then, is that Homans, as an atheist, was writing about letting go of religion, while Capps, in contrast, is writing about how we, specifically men, hold onto religion. Male religion, as Capps sees it, is ambiguously forever "in the neighborhood," like melancholia. In his own words, Capps (2002b) is writing about "the religion my father exhibited, what this religion avails us, what it costs us, and why we cling to it as if our lives depended upon it; which, of course, they do" (p. ix).

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The Creation of Beauty in Modern Japanese Cultural Rituals and in the Physical Environment: The Role of Shinto/Buddhism

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Abstract

A variety of elements create a culture's sense of beauty. Religion is one of the central influences that shape cultural perceptions of beauty. Japanese gardens and tea ceremonies are two representative cultural elements that symbolize the modern Japanese sense of beauty. Historically, Japanese society has been significantly influenced by several Japanese religions, especially Shinto/Buddhism. This paper will examine the influence of Shinto/Buddhism on cultural rituals and the physical environment in modern Japanese society, as reflected in Japanese gardens, tea ceremonies, and other cultural practices.

Introduction

When people are asked what religion they belong to, they are usually able to self-identify as Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, or Buddhist; the answer would vary depending on each person. When Japanese people are asked the same question, they tend to answer "I have no religion." or "I do not know." This response reflects the unique religious traditions of Japan. People will be very confused by the answer, because most people from other countries clearly know what religion they belong to. Why do Japanese people respond in this manner? Why do Japanese people not know what religion they belong to? What do they actually believe? The answer would become clearer by visiting Japan. Japanese people do visit temples and Shinto shrines, and participate in religious activities; however, they do not necessarily realize they are practicing religious activities. This is because those rituals they practice are now just a part of their everyday lives. The rituals and activities used to be recognized as religious events, and passed down from ancestors. Japanese people today, however, practice these rituals and participate in the events as a routine cultural experience. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, in 2005, there were 107 million Shinto believers, 91 million Buddhist believers, 3 million Christian believers, and 10 million other believers in Japan (Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology 2005). The majority of Japanese hold some beliefs of Shinto or Buddhism or both religions. Shinto and Buddhism have a very old history and affect many parts of Japanese culture, such as Buddhism temples, Shinto shrines, Japanese gardens, and tea ceremonies. The influences of Buddhism on cultural rituals and the physical environment have shaped modern Japanese society.

Religion in the Context of the Larger Culture

A culture's sense of beauty is created from a variety of elements. Perceptions of beauty vary within culture and across cultures. However, the components of beauty are the same no matter where people come from. One society sees a colorful painted building as beautiful whereas another society may see a simple and colorless painting is beautiful. Why does this happen? Is it due to socialization or other cultural influences? Probably, they are all correct. Religion, however, is one of the central influences that shape cultural perceptions of beauty. Japanese people practice a variety of rituals. Japanese gardens and tea

ceremonies are two famous representative cultural elements that symbolize the Japanese sense of beauty. In order to understand those cultural elements, it is necessary to understand an important a Japanese indigenous religion called Shinto. The word “Shinto” means, “The way of the *Kami*”. *Kami* is a Japanese word for god. However, *Kami* is not what people usually imagine; it is a natural force within objects or places. It is a spiritual high being (Reader, 1998). The basic idea of Shinto comes from the idea of animism – the idea that a soul or spirit existed in every object” (Hefner, 2008). The belief of Shinto is all elements have god even in plants, rocks, mountains, seas, and rivers. Although the history of Shinto is very old, in the present day, Japanese people still practice a number of Shinto rituals. The idea of *Kami* has created a lot of festivals in Japan. The original idea of festivals is to provide appreciation to *Kami*. One example of a festival is a New Year’s festival called *Hatsumoude*. This event is the most famous festival, and almost all Japanese people participate in this event. The festival begins the day at the beginning of the year. People go to a Shinto shrines to thank the *Kami* for the help of the previous year, and ask for help and fortune in the new year. A common ritual that people practice is giving some money, to *kami*, when they ask for assistance for the year. After that, they pick a fortune paper called *Omikuji*. This is similar to a lottery, but also predicts a fortune for the coming year. Also, it tells things that should be done and activities that should be avoided. Shinto deals with the beginning and birth (Reader, 1998). For example, when a baby was born, the baby is taken for a first visit to Shinto shrine by his/her parents and grandparents within thirty days after the birth, called *Omiyamairi*. In the shrine, the baby’s parents report to *Kami* the birth of the baby and ask for protection. On the other hand, Buddhist temples deal with the end and death. Therefore, temples own a lot of graves, and also people perform ceremonies for their ancestors there. Shinto religious practices have greatly affected modern Japanese society.

The Japanese gardens and tea ceremonies are created from the ideas of Shinto/Buddhism religion.

These gardens are historically located in Japanese Buddhism temples. The garden generally contains some huge and small size of rocks, sand, and trees, and some gardens contain a small pond. Japanese people use the surrounding elements to create the garden without changing the nature elements. The idea of the gardens includes appreciating nature, and Japanese people used the idea of religious and philosophical thoughts to create these gardens. They are very unique because a view of the garden varies depends on the seasons. People enjoy watching the different “pictures” from spring to winter. The history of Japanese gardens is very old. However, the first Japanese gardens did not look like what people imagine. It is said that the basic structure of the gardens originally came from China (Beppu Shofuen, 2000). After the entry of Buddhism into Japan, Japanese gardens spread though in many temples; as a result, the structure of the gardens changed. The cultural perception of Japanese gardens continues to change across each generation.

Without the formation of Japanese gardens, tea ceremonies would not exist. Tea ceremonies are a special style of serving tea to visitors. This is not only serving a tea to guests, but also it is a form of philosophy, religion, and art. A tea ceremony is a place for people to think about life, enjoy watching Japanese gardens and Japanese art-crafts that they use for the ceremony, and teach hospitality. It is a total art. Tea ceremonies were influenced from training for Zen Buddhism practice. It gives people a place to focus on making teas without any distractions, and let themselves calm down. Japanese gardens and tea ceremonies are the center of Japanese beauty. What people can imagine from the gardens and tea ceremonies is tranquil, peaceful, and organized. That is what they consider beauty based on Japanese culture.

History of Shinto/Buddhism in Japan

It was mid-sixth century, *Asuka* era, Buddhism was brought to Japan by the Koreans to Japan. The King of Korea sent a statue of Buddha with a letter supporting the Emperor of Japan. Before the entry of Buddhism, Japanese practiced Shinto solely. When Buddhism was brought in Japan, there was a conflict between the royal families who supported Shinto, and who wanted to introduce the new religion. Afterwards, Buddhism became a major Japanese religion. Around that time, a lot of temples were built by those royalties, and it became the heart of Japanese politics and education. Some of those temples that were built at that time still exist in Japan today. Buddhism was the people's predominant religion for 1200 years until Christianity was introduced (Reader, 1998). However, Buddhism did not become completely a dominant religion; it did not sweep the beliefs of Shinto away. People kept the idea of Shinto inside and still believed *Kami* as their higher being. The idea of Shinto and Buddhism mixed by believing *Kami* and Buddha at the same time, and created Japanese Shinto/Buddhism religion. These two different religions created a unique Japanese way of Buddhism and its forms have varied through Japanese long history. In the ninth centuries, *Heian* era, the first two branches of Buddhism are created by two monks who studied in China. In the thirteenth century, *Kamakura* era, Buddhism became simpler and more obtainable for locals who were not familiar with Buddhism.

The word, *Kamikaze* was originally made in this century. The meaning of the word is "the wind of god." When Mongolian warriors tried to attack Japan, a typhoon attacked, and destroyed all the Mongolian ships. Japanese people called the wind "the wind of *Kami*": hence *Kamikaze*. People believed *Kami* protected the land of Japan. During the era, samurai took over power from the royalties; therefore, different branches of Buddhism that were favored by the samurai became popular. During the fourteenth century, in *Muromachi* era, a lot of arts and crafts were influenced by Buddhism. A few examples would be ink and washing painting, tea ceremonies, and Japanese gardens. In the seventeen to nineteen century, *Edo* era, Buddhism faced a crisis, which was the introduction of Christianity. *Daimyo* (the most hereditary powerful lords and rulers who own lands) regulated people practicing Christianity. People were punished when they practiced Christianity. *Daimyo* set a picture of Christ or Virgin Mary on floor and asked people to step on it. This process was called *Fumie*. If a person could not step on it, he/she was considered as Christian and punished. *Daimyo* feared that Christianity was taking over Japan, and increasing western influence in Japanese culture. This is how they protected Buddhism in this era. Although Buddhism is Japan's major religion, Japanese people have kept their indigenous religion at the same time. Throughout history, Shinto and Buddhism blended well, and people pursued the Japanese way of Buddhism and Shinto/Buddhism. People still practice Shinto/Buddhism rituals today without fully recognizing the true meaning of the religion.

Aspects of Different Branches of Buddhism in Japan

Buddhism in Japan has different branches much like Christianity. Each branch has a different way to express their uniqueness and thoughts. There are two big Buddhism denominations in the world: Theravada and Mahayana. Thai Buddhist practices Theravada whereas Japanese Buddhist practices Mahayana. The ultimate goal of Mahayana is to save civilians that need help for their lives, since there were a lot of Buddhism denominations that are aim to save royalties at that time. Those who practice Mahayana created different branches that Japanese people practice today. According to the Agency for Cultural Affairs, in 1996, there are 94 million Japanese people that are Buddhist and the most of them belong to some branch of Buddhism (Reader, 1998). Japanese Buddhism has many types

of branches and they are different from each other. The shapes of statues and readings of Buddhism are different, and each branch produces a variety of cultures. For example, there are Japanese gardens and tea ceremonies that are created by people who believe in Zen Buddhism (*Zen-shu*). However, a lot of Japanese people do not even know what type of branch their family belongs to. The branches of Buddhism originally came from China by two monks who traveled there and studied Chinese Buddhism. What those two monks started in Japan is called *Tendai-shu* and *Shingon-shu*. *Tendai-shu* became the Japanese basic religion and greatly influenced Japanese culture. *Tendai-shu* teaches that everyone can attain *satori*, which means losing all anxiety and greediness, and attain the truth. This is also known as enlightenment. *Shingon-shu* teaches that everyone can become Buddha in this world by training themselves, and by realize the true meaning of life. In 1000 to 1200, there were many different branches created. They were mostly *Jyodo*; they were simpler and easier for people to understand, and it became very popular among local people. It teaches that everyone will be able to go to Buddha's world (after life) just by chanting *nembutsu*, which literally means "Buddha in mind" - imagining Buddha and chanting Buddha's name or a Buddha recitation (Lewis, 2006). Many branches developed from *Jyodo*. *Jyodo-shu* is the basic branch of *Jyodo*, and it teaches everyone will be able to go to Buddha's world after the death by chanting *nembutsu*. *Jyodoshin-shu* is also a *Jyodo* branch that was broken apart from *Jyodo-shu*, and changed little from what was already there. It teaches that all good people and bad people will be able to be saved by Buddha. Since *Jyodo-shu* teaches everyone will be able to go to Buddha's world, *Jyodoshin-shu* says that all the bad people definitely will be saved too. Buddha is the dominant high being. Today, there are five dominant branches of Buddhism in Japan: *Tendai*, *Shingon*, *Jyodo*, *Zen*, and *Nichiren* (Agency for Cultural Affairs, 1998). No matter what branch people belong to, the ultimate goal of religion is to save people and relieve people from anxieties. These different branches of Buddhism created unique Japanese culture and customs. The branches have been passed on from generation to generation.

Uniqueness of Japanese Buddhism

Buddhism entered Japan from Korea in mid-sixteen century, and it dramatically affected Japanese history, culture, and religion. Without the entry of Buddhism, today's society of Japanese culture would not exist. About fifteen centuries have passed since the first form of Buddhism entered Japan. Both Korea and Japan have created their own style of Buddhism throughout their history. Buddhist monks are not supposed to have a wife and are not allowed to eat meat. However, Japanese monks are allowed to have a wife and to eat meat. It because most temples are passed down from ancestors and their sons must keep the temples; therefore, he needs to be married and have children. One more Japanese unique system is called the "*Danka* system" that was made in mid-seventeenth century, *Edo* era. This system is that all Japanese families belong to a certain Buddhism temple, and funerals and related activities will be done there by a monk who owns the temple. The original reason for this is because *Daimyo* wanted to abolish all "hidden Christians" by keeping families' information (e.g., marriage licenses), and residence information in the temples (Yoshida, 2008). Those "hidden Christians" usually pretended as if they were Buddhist in public; however, once they came into their house, they practiced as a Christian. Today, those temples do not keep family information, but still hold funerals and related activities there.

When people visit Buddhist countries, such as Thailand and Korea, they often impressed by the brilliant temples and golden Buddha statues. In Thailand, there is a huge golden Buddha statue lying on the ground, and people are able to see golden and colored temples

everywhere. This is how Thai people portray Buddha as their special and valuable high being. Meanwhile, Japanese temples and the statues are very different from the ones in Thailand. None of the Japanese temples are colored or golden. All of them are made with wood and rock. The idea comes from the thought of Shinto; all nature and creatures have spirits. By using the natural woods without processing them, people created the temples and statues as a sacred place. There is a core difference of how they see beauty. When Japanese people see golden statues of Buddha and colorful temples, they think those statues do not look valuable but look cheap. Whereas, Thai people consider they look valuable. Today, in Japan, those Buddha statues are no longer for religious matters; instead, it is for the enjoyment of watching one of the traditional arts. People enjoy the environment of the historical wooden temples and statues that are made by wood and rock from 2000 years of history. In the old days, people who created Japanese gardens and practiced tea ceremonies considered them to be a calm and peaceful atmosphere. This sense of beauty is passed down from earlier generations, and those new generations still see beauty the way their ancestors saw it. People are very concerned with aesthetics. In Kyoto, people are still able to see the ancient atmosphere everywhere and experience the feeling of history.

Conclusion

Clearly, Japanese Buddhism and cultural rituals are very unique. Throughout history of Japan, it has changed in shape and form. First, there was an indigenous religion called Shinto in Japan. The idea of Shinto comes from animism. Japanese people still practice Shinto events such as *Hatsumode*. The meaning of its event is to appreciate *Kami* for a fortune in previous year and asking for a fortune in new year. Japanese gardens and tea ceremonies came from the sense of beauty Japanese people hold. The sense of beauty came from idea of Shinto and Buddhism. Not only those Japanese gardens and tea ceremonies are showing beauty, but also they teach the meaning of life and appreciation of the present moment. In the six century, Buddhism was brought from Korea. Although Buddhism became the dominant religion, people believed in the Shinto religion. During the *Edo* era, believing in Christianity was harshly punished by *Daimyo*. Through history, the idea of Shinto and Buddhism blended together and created the Shinto/Buddhism religion. Each Japanese family belongs to their own branch of Buddhism that was passed down from ancestors. Japanese branches of Buddhism influenced much of Japanese culture, and each branch has a different form of practice. In contrasting Japanese Buddhism with Thai Buddhism and Korean Buddhism, Japanese Buddhism is very different. Most of the Buddha statues and temples are made from wood and rock. This idea came from the idea of Shinto/animism. Also, people do not really go to these sacred places for religious reasons anymore. However, when Japanese people see the spiritual statues, traditional temples, and Shinto shrines, they unconsciously put both palms together and express appreciation to Buddha and *Kami*. In contemporary Japanese society, people often do not identify themselves as Buddhist. Culturally, however, their minds and souls naturally feel special when they see Buddha statues, and they more fully understand their Japanese heritage as Buddhist or Shinto/Buddhist.

Biographical Note

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Church Revitalization through Church Planting: A Statistical Analysis of Church Planting Sponsorship in Southern Baptist Churches

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Introduction

In a recent study, Bill Day presented a definition of a healthy church which revealed that 89% of Southern Baptist Churches are plateaued or declining.⁹⁶ Prior to Day's study, C. Kirk Hadaway had offered a definition which revealed that 70% of Southern Baptist Churches were plateaued or declining.⁹⁷ In his initial study, Hadaway defined growing churches as: \pm 10% membership change over a five-year period. He found that 51.9% of SBC churches were on a plateau and 17.6% were declining. Using either definition, it is apparent that most Southern Baptist Churches are in need of revitalization.

C. Peter Wagner stated, "The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches."⁹⁸ While this may be a bold statement, research exists to support his premise. Further, many denominations, including the Southern Baptist Convention, have adopted church planting as a means to further God's kingdom. Church planting seems to be an effective method for reaching the unchurched.

A crucial aspect to planting a new church is the involvement of a sponsor church. The church planter looks to his sponsor church for coaching, prayer support, financial support, and sometimes even manpower. A successful church plant is often the result of a healthy church plant-sponsor church relationship. It is important that a church plant have a sponsor church. Often, though, a potential sponsor church wonders if they are capable of sponsoring a church plant. Pastors worry that the church planter will drain funds from an already stretched budget, or draw members and other resources away from the sponsor church, especially if the church plant is relatively close to the sponsor church.

This study sought to analyze the impact of planting new churches on the sponsoring churches. Research was conducted by means of a statistical analysis of sample churches which sponsored a new church plant in 1999. The results could be used on the field to aid pastors and church planters to make informed decisions about sponsorship of a church plant. For the local pastor, the research could be used to convince local congregations that are plateaued or declining to invest in kingdom growth through sponsorship of a church plant in order to stimulate revitalization in their local church. For the church planter, the research will provide information to potential sponsor churches about the most successful relationships between church plants and their sponsor churches. In this way, God's resources may be most effectively applied for the greatest harvest.

⁹⁶Bill Day, "Proposed New Definitions for Growing, Plateaued, and Declining Churches in the SBC" a presentation at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Research Fellowship in Atlanta, GA, September 23, 2004.

⁹⁷C. Kirk Hadaway, *Growing Off the Plateau: A Summary of the 1988 'Church on the Plateau' Survey* (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the SBC, 1989).

⁹⁸C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990), 11.

Methodology

Data Sources

Databases stored on the network hard drives of the Center for Missional Research, NAMB and containing the Annual Church Profile data for the years 1994-2004 served as a primary source for this investigation. In 1999, there were 41,099 churches in the Southern Baptist Convention. Of these churches, only 753 churches reported at least one new mission type church started in 1999. The reporting churches were dispersed among forty four states and two United States territories (See Table 1). These churches were mailed a copy of the NAMB Sponsor Survey along with a pre-addressed, stamped envelope. The sponsor churches from the ACP databases were then compared with the sponsor churches from the NAMB Sponsor Survey and non-sponsoring churches were filtered out.

A total of 129 churches were removed from the sample group for one of two reasons. There were 117 churches which responded to the NAMB Sponsor Survey stating that they did not sponsor a church plant. The remaining 12 churches were removed because they did not report for all of the years preceding the sponsorship year due to the fact that the sponsor church was not in existence in 1994. The final number of churches to be analyzed in this research project was 624. ACP data for these churches were collected for the years 1994 through 2004.

The 624 sponsor churches planted a total of 948 church plants in 1999. The mean was 1.52 church plants. The mode was 1. The number of church plants sponsored by the sponsor church ranged from 1 to 25 (See Table 2 for frequencies of Church Type Missions Started, 1999).

The means of the growth variables in the sample group of sponsor churches were a little larger than means of the SBC population. The sample group makes up 1.5% of the population of SBC churches. Also, the frequency distributions by state of the sponsor churches did not mirror the SBC population. The dis-proportionality of the sample group was possibly attributable to the fact that different state conventions emphasized church planting with varying emphasis.

The Factors

There were fifteen institutional variables and one contextual variable studied in this research project. The institutional factors were: Total Baptisms (TBAPT), Other Additions (OTHADD), Total Membership (TOTMEM), Sunday School Enrollment (SSENR), Average Sunday School Attendance (AVGSS), Total Receipts (TRCPTS), Undesignated Gifts (UNDGFT), Designated Gifts (DESGFT), Cooperative Program Giving (COOP), Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (AAEO), Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO), AM Worship Attendance (AMWOR), Adjusted Resident Membership (RMADJ),⁹⁹ Total Missions Expenditures (TME), and Tithes (TITHES). These variables were reported on the Annual Church profile by the sponsor churches.

For each institutional factor, a before variable and after variable was calculated in order to conduct the appropriate statistical procedures. The calculations were conducted as

⁹⁹Adjusted Resident Membership is the NAMB name for the Resident Membership variable. The Center for Missional Research uses a formula for churches that do not provide an answer for Resident Membership. The formula is simply 70% of Total Membership. This formula is not used for every church, only for the ones with missing data.

follows. First, each monetary factor was adjusted for inflation to 1994 dollars.¹⁰⁰ Next, variables for the five years before the church planting year were added together to form an aggregated before plant year variable (e.g. Total Membership for each church was added by the following formula: TOTMEM94 + TOTMEM95 + TOTMEM96 + TOTMEM97 + TOTMEM98 = TOTMEMBPAG). Finally, the variables for the five years after the church planting year were added together to form an aggregated after plant year variable (e.g. Average Sunday School Attendance for each church was added by the following formula: AVGSS00 + AVGSS01 + AVGSS02 + AVGSS03 + AVGSS04 = AVGSSAPAG). The conversions were conducted for each factor (see Table 3).

The one contextual factor was the proximity of the church plant to the sponsor church (PROX). Sponsor churches replied to a survey sent out by the Center for Missional Research, NAMB, and self-reported the location of the church plant in relation to the sponsor church. The possible answers listed on the NAMB Church Sponsorship survey included: Same Building, Same Community, Different Community/Same City, Different City, Different State, and Different Country (See Table 4).

Descriptives

The following section describes the churches in this study. It should be noticed that churches of all sizes and ethnicity were involved in sponsoring church plants. (See Table 5 for a comparison between the means of the sample group and the SBC population).

Total Membership

Churches of all sizes were involved as sponsor churches. Total membership referred to every member on the church's membership role regardless of whether the member was located close enough to attend regularly or not. The total membership of the churches ranged from 15 to 26,792. The mean total church membership was 684.08. The standard deviation was 1,538.846

Total Baptisms

Baptisms are an important indicator of conversion. Baptisms reveal the evangelistic effectiveness of the local church. Total baptisms for the sponsor churches in 1999 ranged from 0 to 843. The mean for total baptisms was 25.17. The mode was 0. The standard deviation was 61.090.

Other Additions

The sponsor churches also had other additions. These were new members who joined by means other than by baptism. Typically, these forms included a transfer letter from another church or by statement of faith. The transfer letter simply means that the church contacts the former church of the new member and asks for a letter of recommendation for the new member. This letter would state that the new member left the former church in good standing as well as verify that the new member was a baptized believer. Joining the church by statement of faith simply means that the new member states that he or she is a baptized believer and the church accepts that statement of faith as true. The range for the "Other

¹⁰⁰Inflation rate accessed online: http://inflationdata.com/inflation/Inflation_Rate/HistoricalInflation.aspx. Accessed 5/24/07.

Additions” variable was 0 to 795. The mean was 23.72, and the standard deviation was 52.980.

AM Worship

The AM Worship variable described the attendance of the primary worship service for the sponsor church. The mean for this variable was 251.68, and the standard deviation was 521.388. The range was 10 to 8,490.

Church Type Missions Started

The number of new churches sponsored by the church was recorded as “Church Type Missions Started.” The range was 1 to 25, and the mean was 1.52. The standard deviation was 1.699 (See Table 2).

Average Sunday School Attendance

The average Sunday School attendance of the sponsor churches ranged from as low as 7 to as many as 7,449. The mean was 187.55, and the standard deviation was 425.914.

Adjusted Resident Membership

The adjusted resident membership of the church referred to the number of members who live close enough to attend church services regularly. The North American Mission Board adjusted the “Resident Membership” variable for churches with missing values in the variable. The “adjustment” was exchanging the missing value with 70% of the total membership. The researcher did not have access to the number of churches for which the adjustment was necessary. The range of the “Adjusted Resident Membership” was 0 to 20,206. The mean was 507.79, and the standard deviation was 1,161.180.

Undesignated Gifts

“Undesignated Gifts” were gifts that were given to the church’s general operating budget. The mean for this variable was \$295,805.28, and the standard deviation was \$884,853.805. The range was \$0.00 to \$17,722,096.00.

Designated Gifts

“Designated Gifts” were offerings that were given towards a specific line item in the budget or for a specific project (i.e. mission trip, debt reduction, or love offering). The range for this variable was \$0.00 to \$4,324,461.00. The mean was \$91,489.30, and the standard deviation was \$272,007.852.

Tithes

Tithes were essentially the money given to the church in the offering. The mean was \$387,294.58, and the standard deviation was \$1,134,160.983. The range was \$0.00 to \$22,046,557.00.

Total Receipts

Total receipts referred to all money that was given to the church for any reason. The range for "Total Receipts" was \$0.00 to \$26,662,318.00. The mean was \$417,500.61. The standard deviation was \$1,299,030.423.

Total Mission Expenditures

"Total Mission Expenditures" was the variable that reported the specific amount of money spent on missions by the church for the year, 1999. Financial support for the sponsor church generally was reported in this variable, but not necessarily so. The range was \$0.00 to \$3,083,414.00. The mean was \$46,515.47, and the standard deviation was \$151,650.555.

Sunday School Enrollment

Sunday School Enrollment referred to the total number of all persons enrolled in ongoing Sunday School ministry or any similar strategy involving ongoing, open Bible study groups. The range for Sunday School Enrollment was 0 to 14,354. The mean was 395.83, and the standard deviation was 951.608.

Year Church Was Organized

Churches of all ages were involved in sponsoring a church plant. The oldest church to sponsor a church plant was organized in 1769. The newest church was organized in 1994. The mode for this variable was 1952.

Ethnicity

The ethnicity of the sponsor church was also various. A majority of the sponsor churches were White, Non-Hispanic. However, there were numerous ethnic congregations represented as sponsor churches. The ethnic congregations included: African-American, Hispanic, Native American, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, Haitian, and Middle Eastern. A small percentage of Multi-Ethnic congregations were also sponsor churches. Also, while not a specific ethnicity per se, deaf congregations were a part of the ACP ethnicity category, and also among those who sponsored a new church plant (See Table 6 for a frequency distribution of sponsor church ethnicity).

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Sponsor Churches by State

State	Number of Sponsor Churches
Alaska	5
Alabama	29
Arkansas	25
Arizona	23
California	64
Colorado	14
Connecticut	2
District of Columbia	1
Guam	1
Hawaii	5
Iowa	1
Idaho	4
Indiana	11
Kansas	5
Kentucky	44
Louisiana	28
Massachusetts	7
Maryland	6
Michigan	16
Minnesota	3
Missouri	25
Mississippi	24
Montana	8
North Carolina	41

State	Number of Sponsor Churches
North Dakota	2
Nebraska	5
New Hampshire	1
New Jersey	9
New Mexico	10
Nevada	9
New York	12
Ohio	18
Oklahoma	34
Oregon	5
Pennsylvania	13
Puerto Rico	1
South Dakota	1
Tennessee	48
Texas	8
Utah	7
Virginia	26
Vermont	1
Washington	11
Wisconsin	1
West Virginia	9
Wyoming	1
Total	624

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Church Type
Missions Started, 1999

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	482	77.2	77.2	77.2
2	87	13.9	13.9	91.2
3	25	4.0	4.0	95.2
4	9	1.4	1.4	96.6
5	7	1.1	1.1	97.8
6	3	.5	.5	98.2
7	3	.5	.5	98.7
9	1	.2	.2	98.9
10	1	.2	.2	99.0
11	1	.2	.2	99.2
12	2	.3	.3	99.5
13	1	.2	.2	99.7
15	1	.2	.2	99.8
25	1	.2	.2	100.0
Total	624	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: ACP Variable Names Converted to Before and After Variables.

ACP Variable	Converted Before Variable Name	Converted After Variable Name
TBAPT	TBAPTBPAG	TBAPTAPAG
OTHADD	OTHADDBPAG	OTHADDAPAG
TOTMEM	TOTMEMBPAG	TOTMEMAPAG
SSENR	SSENRBPAG	SSENRAPAG
AVGSS	AVGSSBPAG	AVGSSAPAG
TRCPTS	TRCPTSIBPAG	TRCPTSIAPAG
UNDGFT	UNDGFTIBPAG	UNDGFTIAPAG
DESGFT	DESGFTIBPAG	DESGFTIAPAG
COOP	COOIBPAG	COOIAPAG
AAEO	AAEOIBPAG	AAEOIAPAG
LMCO	LMCOIBPAG	LMCOIAPAG
AMWOR	AMWORBPAG	AMWORAPAG
RMADJ	RMADJBPAG	RMADJAPAG
TME	TMEIBPAG	TMEIAPAG
TITHES	TITHESIBPAG	TITHESIAPAG

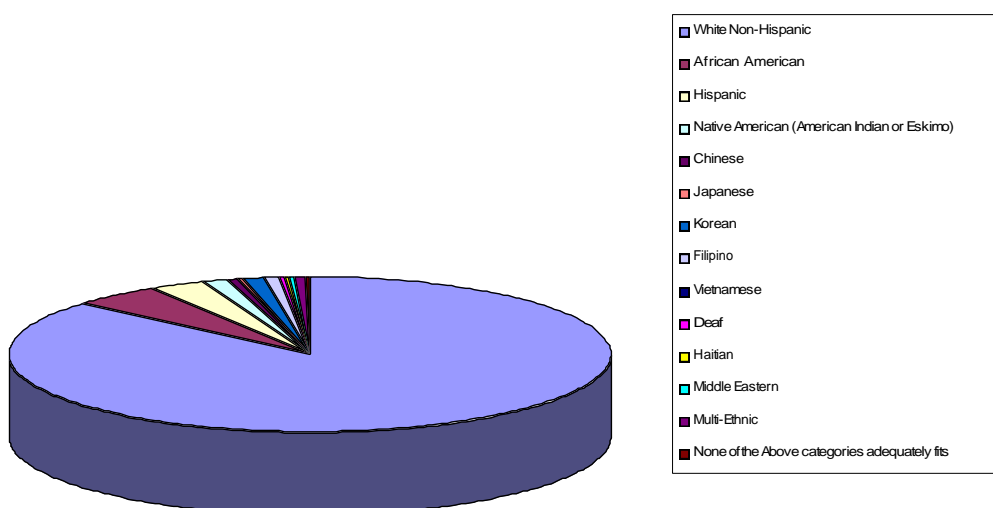
Table 4: Frequency Distributions for the Variable: Proximity of Church Plants to Sponsor Churches

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Same Building	91	554847.8650	886662.68804	92947.50512
Same Community	28	539923.6477	665646.49615	125795.36356
Different Community/Same City	62	660307.1101	941408.82919	119559.04087
Different City	100	365108.9543	652092.39542	65209.23954
Different State	4	1644951.4590	1827159.84516	913579.92258
Different Country	12	444549.0481	757558.31358	218688.24814
Total	297	521795.7862	830329.34739	48180.59549

Table 5: Comparison of Means between Sponsor Church Sample Group and SBC Population

Variable	Sponsor Churches		SBC Population	
	N	Mean	N	Mean
Total Baptisms	624	25.17	40507	10.3
Other Additions	624	23.72	40507	11.3
Total Members	624	684.08	40507	384.5
Total Sunday School Enrollment	624	395.83	40507	197.8
Average Sunday School Attendance	624	187.55	40507	96.2
Total Receipts	624	417500.61	40507	166503.24
Undesignated Gifts	624	295805.28	40507	136223.15
Designated Gifts	624	91489.30	40507	37430.97
Total Mission Expenditures	624	46515.47	40507	19332.81
Morning Worship Attendance	624	251.68	40507	131
Adjusted Resident Membership	624	507.79	40507	272.8
Tithes and Offerings	624	387294.58	40507	176475.74

Table 6: Race/Ethnicity of Sponsor Churches 1999



Findings

Paired Samples t-test

Paired samples t-tests were conducted on the fifteen variables utilized in the study to determine whether or not to accept or reject the first hypothesis ($\alpha = 0.05$). The first hypothesis stated, "Significant differences existed between church growth variables for the five years before the year of plant and the five years after the church plant sponsorship." The following results were recorded (See Table 7 for the results).

Total Baptisms

The null hypothesis was that there would be no difference between the means of Total Baptisms Before the Plant and Total Baptisms After the Plant (H_0 : TBAPTBPAG = TBAPTAPAG). The alternate hypothesis was that there would be a difference (H_1 : TBAPTBPAG \neq TBAPTAPAG). The t statistic obtained ($t = -0.796$) was outside of the critical region ($t_{crit.} = \pm 1.960$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. The total baptisms before and after the plant year were not significantly different, $t(623) = -0.796$, $p = 0.426$, two tails.

Sunday School Enrollment

The null hypothesis was that there would be no difference between the means of Sunday School Enrollment Before the Plant and Sunday School Enrollment After the Plant (H_0 : SSENRPAG = SSENAPAG). The alternate hypothesis was that there would be a difference (H_1 : SSENRPAG \neq SSENAPAG). The t statistic obtained ($t = 0.949$) was outside of the critical region ($t_{crit.} = \pm 1.960$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. The Sunday School enrollments before and after the plant year were not significantly different, $t(623) = 0.949$, $p = 0.343$, two tails.

Other Additions

The null hypothesis was that there would be no difference between the means of Other Additions Before the Plant and Other Additions After the Plant (H_0 : OTHADDBPAG = OTHADDAPAG). The alternate hypothesis was that there would be a difference (H_1 : OTHADDBPAG \neq OTHADDAPAG). The t statistic obtained ($t = -1.842$) was outside of the critical region ($t_{crit.} = \pm 1.960$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. The other additions before and after the plant year were not significantly different, $t(622) = -1.842$, $p = 0.066$, two tails.

Total Membership

The null hypothesis was that there would be no difference between the means of Total Membership Before the Plant and Total Membership After the Plant (H_0 : TOTMEMBPAG = TOTMEMAPAG). The alternate hypothesis was that there would be a difference (H_1 : TOTMEMBPAG \neq TOTMEMAPAG). The t statistic obtained ($t = -1.887$)

was outside of the critical region ($t_{crit.} = \pm 1.960$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. The total membership before and after the plant year were not significantly different, $t(623) = -1.887$, $p = 0.060$, two tails.

Average Sunday School Attendance

The null hypothesis was that there would be no difference between the means of Average Sunday School Attendance Before the Plant and Average Sunday School Attendance After the Plant ($H_0: AVGSSBPAG = AVGSSAPAG$). The alternate hypothesis was that there would be a difference ($H_1: AVGSSBPAG \neq AVGSSAPAG$). The t statistic obtained ($t = -0.694$) was outside of the critical region ($t_{crit.} = \pm 1.960$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. The average Sunday School attendance before and after the plant year were not significantly different, $t(623) = -0.694$, $p = 0.488$, two tails.

Total Receipts

The null hypothesis was that there would be no difference between the means of Total Receipts Before the Plant and Total Receipts After the Plant ($H_0: TRCPTSIBPAG = TRCPTSIAPAG$).¹⁰¹ The alternate hypothesis was that there would be a difference ($H_1: TRCPTSIBPAG \neq TRCPTSIAPAG$). The t statistic obtained ($t = -5.889$) was within the critical region ($t_{crit.} = \pm 1.960$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The total receipts before and after the plant year were significantly different, $t(623) = -5.889$, $p = 0.000$, two tails.

Undesignated Gifts

The null hypothesis was that there would be no difference between the means of Undesignated Gifts Before the Plant and Undesignated Gifts After the Plant ($H_0: UNDGFTIBPAG = UNDGFTIAPAG$). The alternate hypothesis was that there would be a difference ($H_1: UNDGFTIBPAG \neq UNDGFTIAPAG$). The t statistic obtained ($t = -5.343$) was within the critical region ($t_{crit.} = \pm 1.960$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The undesignated gifts before and after the plant year were significantly different, $t(622) = -5.343$, $p = 0.000$, two tails.

Designated Gifts

The null hypothesis was that there would be no difference between the means of Designated Gifts Before the Plant and Designated Gifts After the Plant ($H_0: DESGFTIBPAG = DESGFTIAPAG$). The alternate hypothesis was that there would be a difference ($H_1: DESGFTIBPAG \neq DESGFTIAPAG$). The t statistic obtained ($t = -5.050$) was within the critical region ($t_{crit.} = \pm 1.960$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The designated gifts before and after the plant year were significantly different, $t(622) = -5.050$, $p = 0.000$, two tails.

¹⁰¹All monetary variables were adjusted for inflation.

Total Mission Expenditures

The null hypothesis was that there would be no difference between the means of Total Mission Expenditures Before the Plant and Total Mission Expenditures After the Plant (H_0 : TMEIBPAG = TMEIAPAG). The alternate hypothesis was that there would be a difference (H_1 : TMEIBPAG \neq TMEIAPAG). The t statistic obtained ($t = -3.435$) was within the critical region ($t_{crit.} = \pm 1.960$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The total mission expenditures before and after the plant year were significantly different, $t(623) = -3.435$, $p = 0.001$, two tails.

Cooperative Program

The null hypothesis was that there would be no difference between the means of Cooperative Program Before the Plant and Cooperative Program After the Plant (H_0 : COOIBPAG = COOIAPAG). The alternate hypothesis was that there would be a difference (H_1 : COOIBPAG \neq COOIAPAG). The t statistic obtained ($t = -1.194$) was outside of the critical region ($t_{crit.} = \pm 1.960$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. The Cooperative Program gifts before and after the plant year were not significantly different, $t(623) = -1.194$, $p = 0.233$, two tails.

Annie Armstrong Easter Offering

The null hypothesis was that there would be no difference between the means of Annie Armstrong Easter Offering Before the Plant and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering After the Plant (H_0 : AAEOIBPAG = AAEOIAPAG). The alternate hypothesis was that there would be a difference (H_1 : AAEOIBPAG \neq AAEOIAPAG). The t statistic obtained ($t = -4.234$) was within the critical region ($t_{crit.} = \pm 1.960$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The Annie Armstrong Easter Offerings before and after the plant year were significantly different, $t(623) = -4.234$, $p = 0.000$, two tails.

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

The null hypothesis was that there would be no difference between the means of Lottie Moon Christmas Offering Before the Plant and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering After the Plant (H_0 : LMCOIBPAG = LMCOIAPAG). The alternate hypothesis was that there would be a difference (H_1 : LMCOIBPAG \neq LMCOIAPAG). The t statistic obtained ($t = -4.073$) was within the critical region ($t_{crit.} = \pm 1.960$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The Lottie Moon Christmas Offerings before and after the plant year were significantly different, $t(623) = -4.073$, $p = 0.000$, two tails.

AM Worship

The null hypothesis was that there would be no difference between the means of AM Worship Before the Plant and AM Worship After the Plant (H_0 : AMWORBPAG = AMWORAPAG). The alternate hypothesis was that there would be a difference (H_1 : AMWORBPAG \neq AMWORAPAG). The t statistic obtained ($t = -5.599$) was within the

critical region ($t_{crit.} = \pm 1.960$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The AM Worship attendances before and after the plant year were significantly different, $t(623) = -5.599$, $p = 0.000$, two tails.

Adjusted Resident Membership

The null hypothesis was that there would be no difference between the means of Adjusted Resident Membership Before the Plant and Adjusted Resident Membership After the Plant ($H_0: RMADJBPAG = RMADJAPAG$). The alternate hypothesis was that there would be a difference ($H_1: RMADJBPAG \neq RMADJAPAG$). The t statistic obtained ($t = -1.176$) was outside of the critical region ($t_{crit.} = \pm 1.960$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. The Adjusted Resident Membership before and after the plant year were not significantly different, $t(623) = -1.176$, $p = 0.240$, two tails.

Tithes

The null hypothesis was that there would be no difference between the means of Tithes Before the Plant and Tithes After the Plant ($H_0: TITHESIBPAG = TITHESIAPAG$). The alternate hypothesis was that there would be a difference ($H_1: TITHESIBPAG \neq TITHESIAPAG$). The t statistic obtained ($t = -5.873$) was within the critical region ($t_{crit.} = \pm 1.960$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The tithes before and after the plant year were significantly different, $t(623) = -5.873$, $p = 0.000$, two tails.

Comparative Analysis

In order to test the second null hypothesis, which stated that the variables would be equally effected by the sponsorship of a church plant ($H_0: TRCPTS = UNDGFT = DESGFT = TME = AAEO = LMCO = AMWOR = TITHES$), the researcher calculated the percent change of the variables found to have been significant in the paired samples t-test. Next, the researcher converted the variables to z scores and then calculated the percent change. The variables examined were Total Receipts, Undesignated Gifts, Designated Gifts, Total Mission Expenditures, Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, AM Worship, and Tithes. The alternate hypothesis was that the variables would not be equally affected by the sponsorship of a church plant ($H_1: TRCPTS \neq UNDGFT \neq DESGFT \neq TME \neq AAEO \neq LMCO \neq AMWOR \neq TITHES$).

As evidenced in Table 8, the variables were not affected equally; therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. Table 9 showed the significant variables in the order of most effected to least effected. The most significant variable, DESGFT, was used for the third hypothesis test.

Table 7: Paired Samples t-test

Variable	Before Plant Mean	After Plant Mean	t	Degrees of Freedom	Significance
TBAPT	103.48	107.25	-0.796	623	0.426
SSENR	1,871.30	1,913.06	0.949	623	0.343
OTHADD	115.97	107.19	-1.842	622	0.066
TOTMEM	3,293.93	3,435.17	-1.887	623	0.060
AVGSS	869.28	1,130.94	-0.694	623	0.488
TRCPTS	1,692,603	2,459,975	-5.859	623	0.000
UNDGFT	1,241,379	1,751,147	-5.343	622	0.000
DESGFT	315,105.4	558,868.8	-5.050	623	0.000
TME	211,546.1	288,605.6	-3.435	623	0.001
COOP	80,817.49	90,295.07	-1.194	623	0.233
AAEO	6,459.32	8,141.66	-4.234	623	0.000
LMCO	15,805.41	19,004.87	-4.073	623	0.000
AMWOR	1,094.64	1,330.05	-5.599	623	0.000
RMADJ	2,455.59	2,542.98	-1.176	623	0.240
TITHES	1,554,869	2,307,391	-5.873	623	0.000

Bold print denotes significant variables.

Table 8: Percent Change of Significant Variables

Variable	Percent Change	z score Percent Change
TRCPTS	45.34	45.34
UNDGFT	41.07	41.22
DESGFT	77.36	77.36
TME	36.43	36.43
AAEO	26.05	26.05
LMCO	20.24	20.24
AMWOR	21.51	21.51
TITHES	48.4	48.4

Table 9: Percent Change of Significant Variables in Ascending Order

Variable	Percent Change	z score Percent Change
DESGFT	77.36	77.36
TITHES	48.4	48.4
TRCPTS	45.34	45.34
UNDGFT	41.07	41.22
TME	36.43	36.43
AAEO	26.05	26.05
AMWOR	21.51	21.51
LMCO	20.24	20.24

Analysis of Variance

The third hypothesis was tested by means of a One-way ANOVA. The null hypothesis was that proximity of the church plant to the sponsor church played no part in the effect on the sponsor church. The alternate hypothesis was that the location of the church plant would impact the effect on the significant variables.

The Analysis of Variance revealed a significant difference between groups, $F(5, 291) = 2.645$, $p = 0.023$. A Tukey B post hoc test revealed that there was a difference between treatments. Specifically, there were two subsets for proximity. The first subset consisted of Different City, Different Country, Same Community, Same Building, and Different Community/Same City. The second subset consisted of Different State.

An examination of the results of the Bonferoni Post hoc tests revealed that the only significant difference was found among subset 2, Different State. Further examination of this treatment revealed that there were only 4 churches in this group. The difference between the sample size for Different State and the other treatments would not allow for a homogeneous variance. Therefore, excluding the treatment, Different State, there were no significant differences between groups. The researcher, then, could not reject the null hypothesis.

Ethnicity Crosstabs

The final question addressed by the study was “what ethnicity was the sponsor churches which sponsored the different ethnic church plants. The researcher utilized crosstabs to discover that all sponsor churches sponsored church plants targeted within the same ethnic as the sponsor church. A total of 301 church plants were sponsored by churches in this study in 1999. White congregations comprised the majority of the sponsor churches and the majority of church plants. White congregations sponsored 126 white church plants, but they also sponsored 146 church plants in 20 other ethnic groups. African American sponsor churches sponsored 6 church plants within their own ethnic group, and 1 of a different ethnicity. Hispanic churches sponsored 6 Hispanic churches, and 2 of a different ethnicity. Native American churches sponsored 2 Native American churches and 3 churches of different ethnicities. Filipino churches planted 1 Filipino church and 1 multi-ethnic church. The other ethnic sponsor churches planted solely within their own ethnic groups.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to determine whether or not the sponsorship of a new church plant had an impact on selected church growth variables in the sponsoring churches. The study involved SBC churches which reported sponsoring a new church type mission (church plant) in 1999. The study was conducted between May 2007 and August 2007.

Summary of the Design

The study utilized institutional data reported annually for the years, 1994-2004, as well as data for one variable from a NAMB Church Sponsorship survey. The data was accessed from the ACP databases and the Church Sponsorship Survey provided by the Center for Missional Research, NAMB. The survey instrument was mailed to selected churches (753) in the Southern Baptist Convention. The single variable taken from the survey dealt with the proximity of the church plant to the sponsor church.

A total of 624 churches were utilized in the study. Fifteen growth variables were identified and compiled for an eleven year period (1994-2004). The variables included: Total Baptisms, Other Additions, Total Membership, Sunday School Enrollment, Average Sunday School Attendance, Total Receipts, Undesignated Gifts, Designated Gifts, Cooperative Program Giving, Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, AM Worship Attendance, Adjusted Resident Membership, Total Missions Expenditures, and Tithes. The variables were aggregated into two time periods: before church plant (1994-1998) and after church plant (2000-2004). All monetary variables were adjusted for inflation. Paired samples t-tests were conducted for each variable and eight variables were found to have been significantly affected.

The means of the eight variables were standardized in order that they might be compared with each other in order to determine the variable most affected. Designated gifts were found to have increased by 77.4%. This variable was then used as the dependent variable in a one way ANOVA to determine whether proximity of the church plant to the sponsor church was a factor. The Designated Gifts variable was utilized because it was the variable that was impacted the greatest. As such, it was the best indicator of the effect of proximity of the church plant on the sponsor church.

Summary of the Results

An examination of the data revealed the following:

1. Hypothesis one stated that significant differences existed between church growth variables for the five years before the year of plant and the five years after the church plant sponsorship. Hypothesis one was accepted for eight of the fifteen growth variables examined. These variables were: total receipts, undesignated gifts, designated gifts, total missions expenditures, Annie Armstrong Easter offerings, Lottie Moon Christmas offerings, AM worship, and tithes.

2. Hypothesis two stated that some church growth variables were impacted to a greater degree than others due to the sponsoring of a church plant. Hypothesis two was accepted. After converting the means of the eight variables discovered via the paired samples t-tests to standardized scores, the percent change was examined and designated gifts were found to have been impacted the greatest at 77.4%.

3. Hypothesis three stated that the proximity of the church plant had no effect on the sponsor church. This hypothesis was accepted. The ANOVA test did not reveal a significant difference between the factors. Location of the church plant had no effect on the sponsor church.¹

4. Hypothesis four stated that sponsor churches would plant homogeneous church plants (within ethnicity). A crosstabs test revealed a pattern of primarily homogeneous church plants, however, five ethnicities planted cross-culturally.

Conclusions

Does sponsoring a church plant have an impact on a church? If so, does it positively or negatively affect the church? This research project found that the sponsor church was positively impacted in eight growth variables. These variables were categorized into two types: monetary variables and worship attendance.

¹A preliminary ANOVA study of proximity utilizing AM Worship as the dependent variable supported the findings of the ANOVA with Designated Gifts as the dependent variable. See dissertation for results.

Monetary Variables

Seven growth variables dealt specifically with the finances of the sponsor church. Of the fifteen variables examined, eight were monetary variables, and seven of these variables were positively affected by the sponsorship of a church plant. The single variable which did not show a significant difference before and after the church plant was Cooperative Program gifts. Designated gifts experienced the greatest percentage increase (77.4%). Tithes were the second greatest percent increase (48.4%).

Worship Attendance

Of the fifteen variables examined, seven variables dealt with people (i.e. membership and attendance). Only one of these variables was found to be significantly different after the church plant year – worship attendance. Worship attendance increased by 21.5% for the five years after the church plant. This finding was somewhat of a surprise to the researcher. Conventional logic would suggest that worship attendance would decrease after the sponsorship of a church plant due to worship attenders moving to the new church plant.

Ethnicity

The researcher noted ethnic churches tended to sponsor church plants within their own ethnic group. This was true in every ethnicity. Five ethnicities planted cross-culturally (White, African American, Hispanic, Native American, and Filipino). White congregations sponsored the most diverse ethnic plants, but this may be due to the fact that the SBC is comprised primarily of white congregations. It was interesting to note that Native American congregations were the only ethnicity to plant more churches outside their ethnicity.

Implications

It is significant that the variables impacted by church plant sponsorship were primarily financial in nature. Designated gifts showed the greatest increase potentially due to the financial obligation of the sponsor church to the church plant. However, an attitude of mission giving seemed to be fostered through the sponsorship relationship. Both Annie Armstrong Easter offerings and Lottie Moon Christmas offerings increased for the five years after the church plant.

An objection to sponsoring a church plant has been that the church did not have enough money to do so. It would appear that this objection has little merit in light of the findings of this study. Not only did the church members give more to the sponsor churches, they gave significantly more. Designated Gifts increased 77.4%. Tithes and offerings increased 48.4%. Giving to missions via Annie Armstrong Easter Offerings and Lottie Moon Christmas Offerings increased by 26.05% and 20.24% respectively. Christians are more than willing to give sacrificially; however, they must be given the opportunity and the vision. Pastors must provide that opportunity and share the vision.

A second objection to sponsoring a church plant is that the church cannot afford to give up any of its members. Worship attendance significantly increased for the five years after the sponsorship of the church plant even though membership and Sunday School attendance did not increase significantly. The only variable that reflected a decrease for the entire sample was Other Additions. It seems that sponsorship of a church plant does not hurt a church's membership (even if it is not readily apparent that it helps the church's membership).

A third objection to sponsoring a church plant dealt more with the location of the church plant. Pastors are often concerned that a church plant in the immediate area will draw away members and prospects for their church. Though there are many answers to this objection (i.e. seating capacity for any one church prohibits the entire community from attending any one church, prospects respond more readily to a church with similar demographic profiles, etc.), this study found that proximity did not appear to have a significant impact on the sponsor church.

In light of the findings of this research project, it seems appropriate for churches to sponsor church plants. It appears as though the sponsoring of church plants creates an interest in missions in the local church. This study showed that the members of the sponsor churches increased financial support of missions and more people attended the worship services. The researcher believes that a mission focused atmosphere in the church aids the members to be more receptive to the Holy Spirit, which allows the members to see their community from a kingdom perspective rather than a parochial perspective.

Suggestions for Future Study

In the course of this study, several areas were noted that require additional study. First, a more thorough examination of the role that church size plays in the effect of church planting sponsorship on the sponsor church. An objection that many church planters hear from pastors of smaller churches is that they are not large enough to sponsor a church plant. While it was noted in this study that churches of all sizes sponsored a church plant and showed significant growth in eight of the fifteen growth variables (and growth in six of the remaining seven growth variables even though the growth was not statistically significant), further study of the sponsorship of church plants by the size of the sponsor church would provide valuable information. A preliminary examination revealed that some differences existed. However, for each church size, proximity of the church plant to the sponsor church had no effect on the sponsor church.

Second, additional research on the type of sponsorship would be beneficial. Though it was not available for this study, the researcher anticipated that the type of sponsorship resembled the variables affected by the sponsorship of a church plant. Anecdotally, many of the sponsor churches in the NAMB Church Sponsorship study described the nature of the sponsorship relationship to be primarily financial. The sponsor churches provided some funding, and often a meeting location for the church plant. This would indicate that God blesses the sponsor church in the same areas where the sponsor church is sacrificially giving. Future study may support this hypothesis.

Third, several variables which did not show a significant difference for the five years after the sponsorship of a church plant had experienced a decrease in the fourth and/or fifth year. Study of the effect of sponsorship for a shorter period of three years may reflect more significant variables. Often the fervor involved with missions will fade over time. A study of a three year period may show that sponsor churches would benefit from sponsoring a church plant every three to four years.

Fourth, in order to isolate the impact of sponsorship in the growth of a church, certain institutional and contextual factors should be examined. Examples of institutional factors include the evangelistic emphasis of the church, the preaching style, and strictness. Examples of contextual factors include geographic location (urban, suburban, and rural) and the population growth of the community.

Biographical Note

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