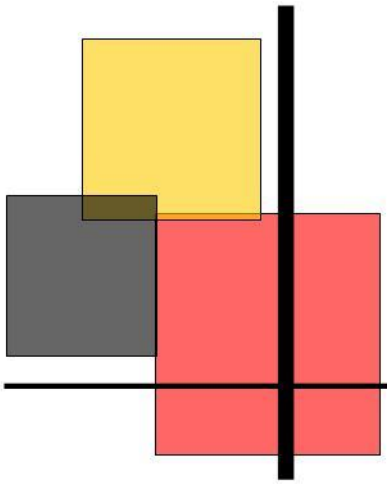
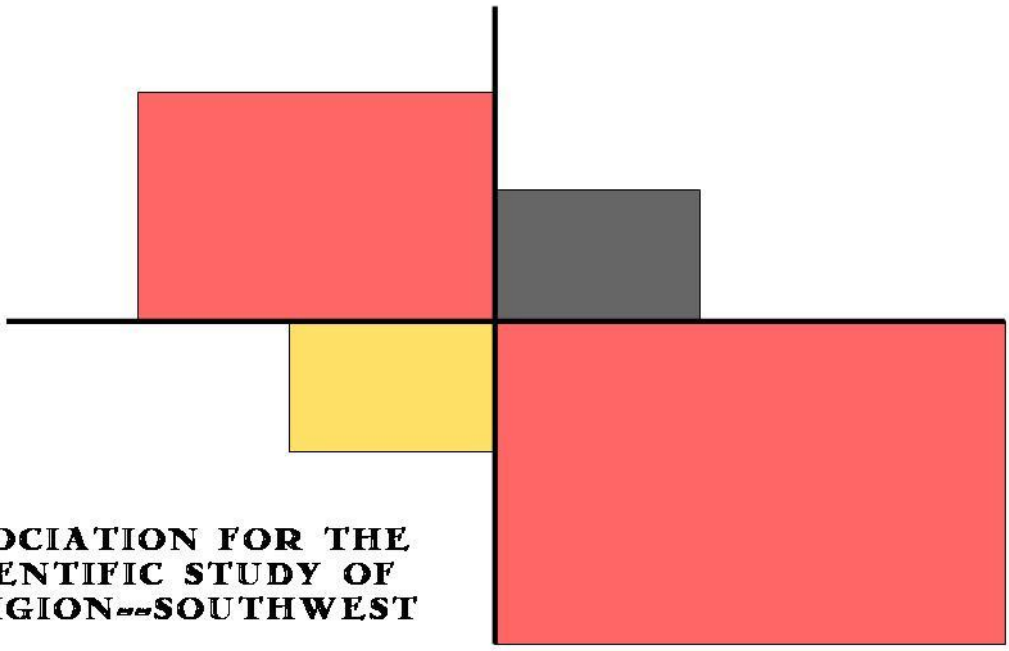
ASSOCIATION FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION--SOUTHWEST



THE YEAR 2008 PROCEEDINGS OF THE ASSR-SW



ASSOCIATION FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION--SOUTHWEST

2008 PROGRAM CHAIR: RICHARD AMBLER
2008 PROCEEDINGS EDITOR: JON K. LOESSIN
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DALLAS, TX

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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 2008 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 is has been, what it is, and what it hopes to become. Joining the ASSR-SW is still free of charge and all we ask in return is your support and participation in our yearly sessions and helping to make them successful by writing and presenting papers, chairing sessions, and attending the presentations of others. Once again, I want to thank all of you for your support.

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. Please let your leadership here at the ASSR-SW know of all who would like to become involved. We have grown significantly over the past few years and would like to see our organization become as inclusive as possible. Please encourage your friends, colleagues, and associates to join and become active next year!

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the officers of the ASSR for this past year. These are the people who, along with our presenters, truly made the Year 2007 meetings possible:

President: Jon K. Loessin, Wharton County Junior College
Vice-President, Programs/Publications: Richard Ambler, Southern Arkansas University
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
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 2008-2009! Be sure to visit our Web Site located 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. Much is happening with ASSR-SW and I hope each of you remains an active participant for many years to come. Thanks.

As always,

Jon K. Loessin
ASSR-SW President and Editor of The Year 2008 Proceedings

Primary Culture: The Existential Situation and the Emergence of Magic

Patrick Scott Smith
Republic, MO

Introduction

The following study will seek to understand how the idea of magic came to play a prominent role in the religious assumption of primary peoples. Discussion will be made as to whether magic is a precursory aspect to religion, or are they interrelating phenomena sharing similar definition, acting conjointly in purpose, emerging from the same circumstance?

Like many religious assumptions, magic can be nothing more than a psychological reaction to and mental extrapolation from the physical environment. Magic in essence reflects a condition of acute vulnerability to the existential situation, manifested as a practice of control, the aim of which is circumstances in the now and the future.

The existential situation, the assumption of control and the emergence of magic

If there were an interaction with the sublime, where, for example, in the Hebrew text the tribes of Israel heard and received instruction from God, the scientific view simply cannot address that, but must look to the relevancy of the existential situation, which is the basis for much religious notion. After all, what else is there beyond our attempts at surviving physical circumstance and our psychological reaction to and rational extrapolations about it?

On this point Frazier relevantly adds,

> Men mistook the order of their ideas for the order of nature, and hence imagined that the control which they have, or seem to have, over their thoughts, permitted them to exercise a corresponding control over things.[1]

As a psychological reaction to existence, Freud's description of magic as coming from the exercise of will in the form of a wish, resulting in what he calls the "omnipotence of thoughts" I think is also relevant.[2]

But when it comes to the idea that an imposed thought can change physical circumstance or destiny, there is little or no evidence that primary peoples deducted and produced a system of magic based on the efficacy of their ideas alone. Rather they produced a system of magic based more on the efficacy of action.

To primary peoples, even modern believers, the effect of thought without physical action is irrelevant. Rather it was extrapolation from the physical control over things--making arrows, bows, shelter, etc.--that instigated the idea of having control over circumstances beyond control such as the weather. This concurs with Max Weber when he theorizes,

> Religiously and magically motivated behavior is relatively rational behavior, especially in its earlier manifestations. It follows rules of experience though it is not necessarily action

[1] Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (New York: W.W. Norton), 103-105.
[2] Ibid., 104-105, 110.

> in accordance with means-end schema. Rubbing will elicit sparks from pieces of wood, and in like fashion the simulative actions of a magician will evoke rain from the heavens. The sparks resulting from twirling the wooden sticks are as much a "magical" effect as the rain evoked by the manipulations of the rainmaker. Thus, religious or magical behavior or thinking must not be set apart from the range of everyday purposive conduct.[3]

As Codrington relates the *mendeka* wizard of the Santa Cruz people of the Solomon Islands,

> To get sunshine he puts up some burnt wood into a tree; to get rain he throws down water at the foot of the Tinota, an ancient *duka*; to make wind he waves the branch of the tree which has this power; in each case he chants the appropriate charm. The same things were done and similar methods followed in the Bank's Islands with the *mana* songs and *mana* stones. The art is the same in the New Hebrides. To get rain the Aurora *gismana* puts a tuft of leaves which has *mana* into the hollow of a stone and on this crushed methysticum; to these he adds one of his collection of stones which has *mana* for rain; all is done with the singing of charms with Tagaro's name. . . .The mass ferments, and steam charged with *mana* goes up and makes clouds and rain. It will not do to pound the pepper too hard, lest the wind should blow too strong.[4]

Codrington also relates this fascinating account, told by Reverend L. Fison, how disease was pulled from the body in Fiji.

> One of our native mission agents in Fiji assured me . . . he had the power of expelling disease causing spirits. . . . He passed his hands over the patient's body till he detected the spirit by a peculiar fluttering sensation in his finger ends. He then endeavored to bring it down to one of the extremities, a foot or hand. . . . And he said, "Even when you have got the demon into a leg or an arm which you can grasp with your fingers, you must take care or he will escape you. He will lodge in the joints, and hide himself among the bones. Hard indeed it is to get him to come out of a joint! But when you have drawn him down to a finger or a toe you must pull him out with a sudden jerk and throw him far away, and blow after him lest he should return."[5]

Similarly in a later belief system Elijah brought back to life a young boy by stretching himself out on him three times and crying to God, "O Lord my God, let this boy's life return to

[3] Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1922), 1.
[4] R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians: Studies in Their Anthropology and Folklore* (New Haven, Connecticut: Hraf Press, 1957), 201.
[5] Ibid, 198.

him!" (1 Kings 17:17-24).

Elijah's student, Elisha, did the same thing to restore the Shunammite's son to life (2 Kings 4:32-35).

Elisha also heals Naaman, not with just prayer and thought, but with the instruction to Naaman to wash in the Jordan River seven times (2 Kings 5:8-14).

Of course, to the primary peoples, outside of what one could do on one's own, assistance was also sought from ghosts, spirit beings or ancestors, but not without concomitant physical action or ritual.

Today in modern times to gain favorable outcomes in the case of pain or disease, hands are laid on and the faithful are anointed with oil. The use of prayer beads is a ritual which assists prayers.

So while magic and prayer, assisted by physical action, mirrors the manipulation of things in everyday life, it is the association between the action and assumed results which makes the means of magic integral and essential to the practitioners. In the making of a spear which is within direct control, the thought process goes: thought + action = spear. Therefore, thought + action = results. In gaining a desired outcome over things beyond control such as a desired form of weather, the rational association and experience with things that are within control is made and logically applied. Therefore, thought + action + association = rain.

How a ritual becomes concretized and repeated comes from the association of the ritual to success. Just as doing things in a certain way results in success when hunting or planting, when a certain ritual involving the construction of things in a certain way accompanied with certain songs and types of action results in the type of weather called for, the magic was a success and will therefore be repeated.

Ingeniously, primary peoples hedged their bets in trying to control the weather and had a perfect answer if things did not go right, if after all the prescribed actions were performed the weather called for did not materialize. Here is a fascinating rationale described by Codrington.

> It is likely enough also that a weather-doctor observed for himself, and was taught by his predecessor to observe the signs of change and steadiness in weather, and brought his charms to work or kept them back according to his observations. But the means he used seemed to him to be so naturally effective, and had been so often followed by the results at which they were aimed, that he seriously believed in them; and if sometimes they failed conspicuously, as when at Ysabel the weather-doctor's own house was blown down by a storm on the very day on which he had warranted a calm, there was also the explanation that another counter-charm had been at work and had been stronger. Such superstition tended to confirm much more than to weaken the belief in the power of weather-doctors.[6]

The psychological condition here is the ritual prescription has to work since it is the only thing that can mitigate the existential fear against a disastrous outcome. If the desired outcome is not obtained, fault cannot lie in the prescription, but has to lie preferably in faulty

[6] Ibid., 193.

performance or in a counter-influence which has interfered with the desired outcome.

Therefore, the assumption of control originates from the existential situation itself. Faced with the full awareness of what the existential situation provides--anonymity, meaningless and death[7]--humans are compelled to create meaning in cosmological, ideological, political and cultural ways. This meaning is further solidified through real or imagined opposition. This is evident in animal sacrifice which as we have seen comes from the observation, "for someone to live someone must die"; the process is then ritualized for effective control and projected onto the existential situation.

Thus we have a means of control (ritual) that results in a projected effect (magic) onto the existential situation which is now infused with meaning when a powerful spirit world also projects effect. Now life has meaning in a struggle against not only the existential situation, but in interaction with a spirit world, which is also sometimes struggled with.

Are Magic and Religion Synonymous?

Some have argued for discernment between magic and religion or for the generative role magic played in the emergence of religion. Styers summarizes some of the cultural problems stemming from the debate:

> For some scholars, placing magic at the origin of religion served to discolor religion's genesis, to malign contemporary religion by establishing its disreputable lineage. For others, identifying magic as the originary stage of religion could demonstrate the power and trajectory of social evolution; culture moved in a clear line of progress from humble beginnings to greater glory. For still others, an emphatic distinction between religion and magic was necessary to protect religion's purity; magic could stand as a vivid foil for religion or even as a protagonist in accounts of religion's degeneration from a stage of primordial monotheistic truth.[8]

Some social scientists have also wanted to simulate Darwinian evolution for the development of religion with a span of time and stages in a drawn out process where one form of religious practice, seen as basic and simplified, leads to another which then casts off the prior form which is seen as superstition.

One of the first influential British thinkers to put an emphasis on magic in the development of religion was John Lubbock. His sequence of religious evolution begins with a lower form of development where humans held no concept about spirit or of right and wrong.[9] This was followed by a belief absent of deity to include an assumption of evil beings only.[10] Next came fetishism, a witchcraft which "has no temples, idols, priests, sacrifices, or prayer . . . and . . . involves no belief in creation or in a future life, and none in a state of rewards and punishments."[11] Fetishism was followed by totemism where all aspects of

[7] Durkheim's anonymity and Freud's terror of meaningless.
[8] Randall Styers, *Making Magic: Religion, Magic and Science in the Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 73.
[9] John Lubbock, *The Origin of Civilization and Primitive Condition of Man* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1879), 158-162.
[10] Ibid., 164.
[11] Ibid., 164-169.

nature--animals, plants, heavenly bodies, even animate objects such as a river and inanimate objects like a stone--might be worshiped. After this, significant progress came with shamanism where spirit beings live in a world to themselves, with which the shaman communicates and cajoles.[12] This condition would change into idol worship, then to anthropomorphism, to subsequently include a creator deity with the final sequence of advanced religion to include a moral code.[13]

Another thinker to simulate Darwinian evolution for the development of religion was the social evolutionist Herbert Spencer. As Styers mentions, "Spencer advocated a naturalistic account for the origins of magic which moved along a clear causal path of euhemerism into the more complex and differentiated forms displayed in modern society."[14]

As Spencer himself states,

> To the presumption that a number of diverse beliefs of the same class have some common foundation in fact, must in this case be added a further presumption derived from the omnipresence of the beliefs. . . . Thus the universality of religious ideas, their great vitality, unite in showing that their source must be deep-seated. In other words, we are obliged to admit . . . they must be derived out of human experiences, slowly accumulated and organized.[15]

To Spencer, religious ideas started with confusion about dreams where the figures in them are somehow extrapolated to become ghosts who are then deified to form what is known as ancestor worship. The stratification and movement towards a pantheon of gods comes from the importance given to powerful living leaders who then die and are given special veneration over against the veneration given to one's own ancestors, thus setting a template for a hierarchy of supernatural beings, some more powerful then others.[16]

To Frazer, the evolutionary process moved from magic, to religion then to science.

> In magic man depends on his own strength to meet difficulties and dangers that beset him on every side. He believes in a certain established order of nature which he can manipulate for his own ends . . . when he recognizes that both the order of nature which he had assumed and the control which he believed himself to exercise over it were purely imaginary, he ceases to rely on his own intelligence and his own unaided efforts, and throws himself humbly on the mercy of certain great invisible beings behind the veil of nature, to whom he now ascribes all those far-reaching powers which he once arrogated to himself.[17]

Thus where magic is superseded by religion's interpretation of nature as chaotic and in need of supernatural intervention, science would usurp religion with its own construct of

[12] Ibid., 222-223.
[13] Ibid., 228-256.
[14] Styers, 74.
[15] Herbert Spencer, *On Social Evolution*, ed. J. D. Y. Peel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 207.
[16] Ibid., 208-212.
[17] James George Frazier, *The Golden Bough* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1922), 824.

an ordered universe.[18]

The problem with the causal line of social evolution in respect to religious development is the religious notions of a particular culture may hold many facets of religious construction with no indication of one aspect evolving from the other or one aspect held in greater esteem then another. For example, the American Indian, with complex social structure (the Powhatans as example), while advocating a creator being, also inculcated into their belief system anthropomorphic spirit beings,[19] animistic elements to nature (the spirit in wind, fire and water) while at the same timed practicing shamanism and totemism as well.[20]

Rather then a causal line of evolution over a length of time, development of religious notion, while syncretistic, was more immediate, coming from psychological reaction to physical conditions. Therefore, the idea of spirit, continuation after death, ancestor worship, object veneration, and totemic inclination would develop in the human psyche from the start and would not change one from the other, but would adapt in reaction to environment, changing technology and population increase. Thus while belief is the theoretical basis of religion and magic is the tool that religion uses to get things done, both have always worked conjointly.

In some instances it could even be argued there is little difference between magic and religion and the construed difference really reflects a cultural bias and the mistake of finding too close an explanation between Darwinian and social evolution. Betz explains,

> Religion used to be treated, without further questioning, as something intrinsically positive, while magic was from the outset stained by negative connotations. Combined with anthropological theories of evolution, sequence and hierarchies were established with some force of persuasion. Consequently, since humanity was thought to be "primitive" at the beginning of its development, an association with magic with this initial phase seemed logical. . . Furthermore sociologists seem to have convinced almost everyone that whatever humans beings undertake, they do so in order to gain or to retain power over others. As a result, people who pursue the question of defining religion and magic tend to find in the definitions themselves nothing but another set of tools for the manipulation and control of social realities.[21]

As Betz goes on to point out, the mystery cult language found in the Greek Magical Papyri finds similarity in Hellenistic Judaism and early Christian literature. "Paul frequently employs 'mystery' as a term designating the revelation of the transcendental realities of the divine world and of wisdom, prophecy, history, the afterlife and, by implication, the

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[18] Ibid., 825.

[19] For example, the twins Born-for-Water and Monster Slayer of the Navajo who killed monsters that harassed the Navajo after their emergence from the underworld. Or Morning Star, the war captain of some pueblos, which can be seen in petroglyph at Santa Fe, New Mexico, with shield carrying arrow and quiver. Ray A. Williamson, *Living the Sky: The Cosmos of the American Indian* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984) 172, 18th picture between 176-177.

[20] Frazier, 617; Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, *Religion in Primitive Culture* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958), 322.

[21] Hans Dieter Betz, "Magic and Mystery in the Greek Magical Papyri," *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone, Dirk Obbink (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 244-245.

sacraments of baptism and the eucharist as well."[22]

Thus, though it could be argued religion never has completely separated itself from magic, when it does, it prescribes a behavior virtuous in itself and altruistic in motive with no immediate guarantee of favorable consequences coming in a mystical way. Examples of the former would be the use of spells in voodoo and the early Greek binding spells[23] and the latter, suggestions for virtuous living, such as: a soft answer turns away wrath[24] or the idea to treat others as one would want to be treated.[25]

Another discernment one might make is where modern religion seeks to answer life's difficulties by request for outside intervention. Magic attempts to make a difference by direct control, thus in early Greek magic as Strubbe mentions, "The power of a curse could also be enhanced by accompanying gestures, such as the touching of the earth or of the accursed person, the performance of a sympathetic action, or the raising of the hands."[26] Yet the ideas, in Jewish and Christian tradition, of sacrifice, healing through anointment, and the laying on of hands, combined with request for intervention, seems to incorporate elements hearkening of magic. Therefore, one could posit that all religious notion is magical and superstitious at its basis.

Some have differentiated religion from magic by the position magic involves an attempt to directly control circumstance, where religion involves a vicarious appeal to a higher being, which could be construed as magnification of the same impulse: to control circumstances beyond one's control.

But in the end I think we have to say where religion involves social system and organization which will include magical characteristics, religious notion when it is disparate from magical inclination comes when there is, absent of ritual, appeal to altruistic action or direct entreaty to higher being.

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 for the Central, Southwest, and Southeast regions. He also presents research on the Herod's Harbor project for the ASOR in the same regions. At present he is working on a book relevant to the religious interests mentioned.

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[22] Betz, 250-251.

[23] Christopher A. Faraone, "The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells," *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone, Dirk Obbink (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3-32.

[24] Proverbs 15:1.

[25] Matthew 7:12. "The so-called Golden Rule is found in negative form in rabbinic Judaism and also in Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. It also occurred in various forms in Greek and Roman ethical teachings." The NIV Study Bible (Grand Rapid, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995) footnote on Matthew 7:12, 1449.

[26] J. H. M. Strubbe, "Cursed Be He That Moves My Bones" *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone, Dirk Obbink (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 42.

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Ritual Expression as Communal Therapy: Teaching Students to Interpret the Response to the Virginia Tech Massacre

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Stephen F. Austin State University

Abstract

The importance of public and personal rituals is highlighted when tragic events catch the attention of the media and thus the watching public. In cultural anthropology courses, we teach the theory behind personal, communal, and public rituals. It is important, however, to remember that ritual is a vital expression of pain, uncertainty, and appeal to the supernatural. Ritual performance is both an expression of grief and evidence of the psychological need to grieve. This type of performance gives us a set of phenomena that can be observed and studied. In particular, public tragedies often result in similar patterns of ritualistic public expression. I recently had the opportunity to demonstrate the educational value of understanding certain ritual expressions as conditioned response to public tragedy. My students had just completed the course material on rituals when the Virginia Tech Massacre occurred. Using examples from previous, recent public tragedies, students were given an optional bonus assignment to observe, classify, and interpret ritual expressions in response to Virginia Tech. Forty three students observed numerous examples of rites of intensification, ritual as influence, and personal expressions of pain. At both the local and national levels, they cataloged not only the use of behaviors, rituals, and artifacts, but also the use of virtual community rituals in forums such as MySpace and Facebook. Their reports show an educational opportunity for applying critical thinking skills to understanding their world and the public dimensions of spirituality.

Introduction

Theories of ritual expression and the function, or meaning, of ritualized behaviors abound in cultural anthropology. The exotic nature of much of the content in our textbooks often removes rituals from the immediate world of our students, however. Students often focus on the rituals and death customs of other cultures—of the exotic, while ignoring their own. As a result, they often think of anthropology and its theories as dealing with "other people", especially "primitive people," not someone as sophisticated and technologically advanced as themselves. They fail to see that out discipline can be applied to their world. It is interesting, sometimes even titillating, but not something they immediately connect to their own worlds. Though very sad, real-world tragedies can become opportunities for teaching both theory and the application of theoretical learning to strategies for understanding and coping with the aftermath of tragic events. This paper describes just such an opportunity from the Spring semester of 2007.

My Cultural Anthropology class at Stephen F. Austin State University had just completed a section on rituals and their function. When we covered common religious rituals, public ritual, and rites of passage, I also introduced material on spontaneous memorialization (Haney et al. 1997) and the therapeutic function of performing and participating in rituals. As examples, I show a variety of spontaneous memorials: roadside memorials, the memorials left at the OKC and 9/11 bombing sites, and shrines left at the homes and graves of the famous (Haney et al. 1997). Because the material is presented soon after a section on culture bound syndromes and reasons for dissociative breaks like

going postal, cabin fever, running amok, and others, I usually make a point to have targeted class discussions of massacres such as the Columbine school shootings as a way of relating violence and dissociative breaks to my students lives. Two weeks later, on April 16, 2007, our class met on the day of the Virginia Tech Massacre. Another faculty member had told me about the ongoing news before class, and we were following the story before class began. Students were talking about it in class, many of them learning it for the first time from other students. Before I could even call class to order, I had several students asking questions about it. Their most coherent questions were "why does that happen?" and "What *will* happen?" It seemed an opportunity to teach students how to make sense of such events by giving them an opportunity to *do something* and *make sense* of the seemingly chaotic events. Ironically, those are the two major functions of rituals in society. I could assign students a ritualistic exercise on rituals that would have educational and therapeutic benefit.

The optional assignment was the following: students would observe, classify, and interpret ritualistic responses to Virginia Tech Massacre through the media or first-hand observation on our own campus. Any media form was acceptable. Students were expected to describe at least three phenomena in terms of type of ritual expression, meaning, symbolism, and function. I reminded them of the lecture material we had just covered, in particular the material on types of rituals. I agreed to anonymously discuss their results with the whole class and give them a chance to share in the analysis and interpretation of the data. Forty three students completed the assignment. Their observations included communal and personal rites of intensification, ideological rituals, and therapy rituals. Ritualized behaviors and symbols were used to express of pain, solidarity, nationalism, and mourning. At both the local and national levels, the students cataloged not only the use of behaviors, rituals, and artifacts, but also the use of virtual community rituals in forums such as MySpace and Facebook. The data from the students appears below in the Results and Discussion sections following a brief description of the class material on rituals the students were using for classification.

Rituals & Cultural Coping Mechanisms

Rituals are simply patterned, repetitive, and recurring sets of behaviors. When the rituals are designed to influence the supernatural, especially through the manipulation or use of religious symbols, they are considered to be religious rituals. In some cases, when the ritual is believed to be powerful enough to actually coerce supernatural powers through manipulation of symbols and symbolic behavior, it is called magic.

Why do people engage in rituals? The obvious answer is that rituals and magic give us a feeling of control in a chaotic and unpredictable world. Studies have shown that rituals are more likely to be used in dangerous and risky endeavors than in low-risk situations (Gmelch 1971). A more reflective answer is that rituals give us the opportunity to *do something*. In a ritual, we are able to act out the situation that frightens us in a controlled setting in which we can conquer our fears or act out a scenario in which we overcome danger and emerge victorious. Rituals allow us to use our ability to play and imagine to conquer the same fears to which that imagination leaves us vulnerable. Psychologically, rituals are coping mechanisms for our worries and fears. They are also ways of expressing our emotions and desire to act on stressful situations. In this way, participation in a ritual is an act of solidarity with the group, demonstrating a desire to help the group by sharing in their pain.

Rituals are structured into three typical phases. The first phase is **separation**. The individual or individuals involved in the ritual are removed from their current status. This can be accomplished ritually, or through a change in social role. Separation may also occur

unintentionally when tragic events jar a person or group of people from their former status. For example, tragic events such as mass killings can frighten people out of their former, complacent roles and into a state of fear and uncertainty. Recognition of the separation and ambiguity of current status is known as the **transition** phase. The transition phase is also described as a state of **liminality** (Turner 1969). Liminality means to be on the threshold between states, neither one nor the other. This ambiguous state is often ritually manipulated to allow the individual to experience altered time, altered reality, or supernatural experiences. It is the time to begin incorporating important aspects of a new social status. The remainder of the ritual is designed to reintegrate the individual into society in a new social role. This **incorporation**, or **reintegration**, reaffirms the social roles of all involved in the ritual and their place in the world. Even audience members experience the therapeutic effects and socially-stabilizing power of rituals thanks to the new order instituted during reintegration. (Turner 1969)

Often, the liminal state incorporates mechanisms for placing participants into a mild trance. Repetitive and rhythmic singing, dancing, and chanting together, participants enter a mild trance state. This increases suggestibility and feelings of solidarity with other participants, a phenomenon called **communitas**. The mildly hypnotic effect is often used effectively in public rituals, religious services, rallies, and even entertainment events by skilled speakers and organizers. Communitas has the interesting side effect of invigorating participants, often leaving them with a new sense of purpose, identity, and membership in the group. Participants feel they have shared in their emotions and emerged united. Rituals symbolically play out fears or tragic events in a format that ritually explains the reasons for troubling outcomes, incorporating the events into the community's worldview. Events are played out in a controlled way in the ritual, bringing events under societal or spiritual control and reaffirming the power of the society/religion. As a result, rituals are therapeutic, making sense of the world and relieving anxiety.

Why do we, meaning people, respond to tragedies with rituals? Simply speaking, rituals are ways of coping and reestablishing order. Societies use a standard repertoire of rituals for death and injury, yet these are not always sufficient if an event that is out of the norm occurs. Haney et al. (1997) introduced and described the concept of spontaneous memorialization for violent deaths in our society. Unexpected, violent deaths, especially of so-called innocent bystanders, have recently begun to result in a series of spontaneous, yet predictable, memorializing behaviors. These memorials are a series of situational or crisis rituals that include gatherings of people with in vigils, singing or chanting, public rites of integration, and numerous signature artifacts: lit candles, flowers, notes, photographs, and symbolic items associated with the dead. Haney et al (1997) proposed that these spontaneous rituals meet an urgent need to respond and grieve that is unmet by traditional mourning rituals. Seven characteristics of spontaneous memorializing rituals distinguish them from traditional mourning rites:

1) It is a private act of mourning open for public display –it is visible demonstration of grief.

2) It occurs at the site of death or a site associated with the deceased, not a prescribed location such as a cemetery or church.

3) Inclusion is voluntary, allowing the griever to define their relationship with the deceased, even when no previous, obvious social connection existed.

4) The artifacts used are eclectic, mixing traditional death symbols with those tailored to express connection with the particular victims or circumstance (*this can result in seemingly incongruous mixtures, such as teddy bears, dolls, flags, ribbons, beer cans, sports jerseys or logos mixed with traditional death symbols such as flowers, and religious icons)*.

5) The items left are designed to express the emotions or identity of the mourner, not

more abstracted traditional symbols.

6) The timing is unconstrained by cultural norms. Instead of occurring at set times and for a set duration, the memorials begin much more immediately after death and can continue for weeks, months, or even years after traditional ceremonies have concluded, allowing the mourner to demonstrate grief as long as desired.

7) Finally, spontaneous memorials grieve for cultural implications as well as the actual dead, symbolizing changes or controlled threats in daily life, highlighting a shared vulnerability for all.

Results & Discussion

Forty three students responded, each describing three phenomena observed. The types of rituals observed included numerous different rites of intensification used as occasional and crisis rituals. The rites of intensification included both therapy rituals for healing psychological and social injury to witnesses and victims and ideological rituals designed to reintegrate the Virginia Tech University community as well as the larger public.

Rites of intensification are rituals used as influence. Participants call upon supernatural forces for help in overcoming difficulties. The students observed students, local politicians, ministers, and even local law enforcement officers calling upon people to pray for the victims, their families, and the Blacksburg, Virginia, community in public announcements, media postings, and interviews (in newspapers, on television, on internet news sites, and in MySpace and Facebook pages. Larger, communal rituals were also rites of intensification with a great focus on influencing rituals. Better known politicians and ministers appeared at nationally televised memorial services, including the current U.S. President, George W. Bush. Music ranged from traditional mourning music to uplifting religious pieces sung by church choirs. One element, however, puzzled the students reporting the rituals. The campus memorial service concluded with the Virginia Tech fight song. The students sang and cheered together – an incongruently happy/celebratory act to my student audience. It was one of the questions they brought to class. "Why were they smiling and cheering and singing a fight song?" I didn't have to answer, because the other students knew the answer. While the ritual was about mourning and expressing grief, its larger purpose was actually to heal the community. The memorial service ritual allowed expression of grief and replaying of the events. It memorialized the loss. The ritual, however, transformed the tragic event by reinterpreting it through the community's ideology and using it as an opportunity to bind the group together with new purpose. Concluding with the Virginia Tech fight song gave the participants a renewed sense of identity as members of the community, as veterans who had survived by banding together, and as a community that would start life again made stronger by the experience.

Additional rituals occurred at other locations. Universities around the country held vigils and many gathered groups of students, staff, and faculty on their football fields for photographs. The participants dressed in Virginia Tech colors and arranged themselves so that they spelled out "V-Tech". Universities sent these photos along with letters of condolence and support from their populations.

As important as the larger, public rituals were the spontaneous memorials demonstrating personal expressions of pain. At both the local and national levels, they cataloged not only the use of behaviors, rituals, and artifacts, but also the use of virtual community rituals in forums such as MySpace and Facebook. Before the crime scene had even been cleared, students were gathering together and even posting on internet communities such as MySpace and Facebook. My students found narratives and virtual memorials online through these two sites the night of the attacks. Some of the postings dated to *during* the attacks, as students and friends tried to let loved ones know they were

alive and safe as they hid on the locked-down campus. Camera phone images were playing online and on CNN before police were inside the building. It was immediate memorialization and it continued to evolve longer than the news reports on television, especially people (mostly college students) from around the country and world who virtually joined with the Virginia Tech students through these forums. By 8:15 pm on April 24, 2007, just 8 days after the massacre, Facebook.com had recorded 118 gatherings and vigils.

Candlelight vigils occurred that night and the following night. Students brought images of students standing together by the candlelight in their Coca-Cola cup-shielded candles. By dawn the next day, ribbons adorned trees and campus landmarks. Photos and notes were left, and flags representing the nationalities of the victims. Most of all, people in Blacksburg, on the campus, and even at our university in Texas wore Virginia Tech's school colors as a sign of solidarity. Teddy bears, flowers, pictures of the victims, Virginia Tech paraphernalia, and stationary candles were also left.

Why the spontaneous memorialization? "They were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time" said President George W. Bush in a condolence speech (Gibbs 2007). The victims were not doing anything inherently dangerous; their deaths were violent, unexpected, and blameless. According to Haney et al (1997), this is the exact sort of situation in which spontaneous memorials arise. But were the memorializations and rituals spontaneous? We have become all too familiar with the pattern in the last two decades. We were surprised at the memorials and had to invent ritual forms after the Oklahoma City bombings. We learned what to do for September 11th and for the numerous high school shootings that occurred in the 90s and 00s. Columbine High School is a cultural landmark, an end to innocence for our culture and it's ideals that our youth were off limits for senseless violence. Harrison (2008) described the invention of a new grieving tradition for children in Japanese society. Americans greatly value the innocence and nurturing of an extended childhood. Violence and death of innocent children, even high school or college "kids", raises grief and impotent rage in us as a society dedicated to protection of our young that is greater than the deaths of adults or those engaged in behaviors culturally accepted as "risky." We leave our children in schools because adults must work, and we need to feel that they are safe in these community-constructed parenting facilities.

Virginia Tech was the highest body-count thus far, but as I write this paper, another incident has occurred at Northern Illinois University. We have cultural contingency plans for these events, rituals that we now know will occur in an accepted pattern. Television reporters know to look for the shrines, the vigils, and the artifacts of grief. They know which experts to have on their talk shows. We have learned the cultural formulae. That said, the importance of personal, community, and public ritual is just as important. These rituals must be enacted because of the importance of symbolic expression and our need to cope with our grief, uncertainty, helplessness, and anger. That is what rituals do and why cultures have these mechanisms.

The exercise served to teach students how to interpret and understand how rituals are used in their own society. Their responses demonstrated the educational value of teaching about rituals and their purpose. It also demonstrated that students can benefit from integrating social theories into interpretation of events in their lives because they expressed greater calm and reduced personal anxiety through applying critical thinking skills to understanding upsetting events. Overall, these types of tragic events occur all too often. Teaching students not only about the theory of rituals but their importance in mourning and coping at a personal, communal, and national level teaches them an important lesson in critical thinking and the therapeutic use of common cultural practices.

Biographical Note

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Teaching the Bible Objectively in the Public Schools: Some Epistemological Issues

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Abstract

Recent proposals in *Time Magazine* and elsewhere for teaching the Bible in the public schools raise critical epistemological issues. Great literature in the West often refers or alludes to biblical passages, themes, narratives, and images. Biblical literacy is an element of a liberal arts education. Can the Bible be taught objectively? I argue that the *tabula rasa* model of purging the mind of biases is an epistemological version of restoring the innocent, pristine noble savage. Biases and indoctrinations are the necessary beginning of objective inquiry. Multiple indoctrinations combined with both internal criticism and comparative criticism better approximate the regulative ideal of objectivity. Can "teaching the Bible as literature" bypass the epistemological issue of the historical claims in the Bible? Literary criticism raises its own epistemological issues. Even if the general populace in the days of Socrates and Plato believed in the existence of the ancient Greek gods, did the authors of the stories believe what they wrote? Believing *in* entails believing *that*. Did the Hebrew author of Exodus 33 believe *that* Yahweh had a face (which Moses was not permitted to see) and a back (which Moses was permitted to see)? If Yahweh has face and back, does he have kidneys, brain cells, and veins? In short, if interpreters regard this Yahweh as a theophany, how does a theophany differ from a hologram? Are these questions a teacher might properly raise in class? If not, what is the criterion to guide teachers? Who is authorized to enforce the criterion? The debate over the criterion creates new epistemological issues in setting public policy.

Introduction. In the April 2, 2007, issue of *Time* appeared David Van Biema's article "The Case for Teaching the Bible." The magazine's front cover featured a picture of *Cliff Notes* with the title "On the Bible." Beside it were words in bold print: **"Why We Should Teach The Bible In Public School."** Below it appeared the following in smaller print: "{But very, very, carefully}." In the 1963 *Abington Township School District v. Schempp* decision that removed official prayers and devotions from the classroom, Justice Tom C. Clark explicated the majority opinion: "Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as a part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistently with the First Amendment." For Justice Clark, while teaching *about* religion is a part of objective teaching, the teaching *of* religion was not. I will explore the question of whether it is possible to teach objectively about the Bible.

Should the academic study of the Bible be regarded as at least an option within a secular program of education? A "secular program of education" is not to be confused with using the classroom to indoctrinate students exclusively in a philosophy of secularism. Rather, it refers to education as the imparting of pertinent information and the development of academic skills. The Bible is arguably the most influential book in the Western Hemisphere. The Qur'an is, of course, one of the most influential in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. In various ways, the Qur'an draws material from both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are sometimes referred to as religions of "the Book," specifically the Hebrew Bible.

Much of literature studied in the schools either refers to the Bible directly or alludes to some of its passages, stories, and images. Ideally, teaching about the Bible in the public

schools will help raise the level of biblical literacy and increase students' understanding of one of the major cultural forces and traditions that has helped shape their lives. Scholars and others may debate the positive and negative influences of the Bible, but they would find it difficult to deny its influence in many areas of private and public life in especially the Western Hemisphere.

Biases. Is it possible to teach about the Bible objectively? In 1976, I received a grant from Texas Commission for the Humanities to assemble public school principals and superintendents to explore issues of teaching about religion in the public schools. Some of them insisted that they required their teachers to park their biases outside the classroom lest they have undue influence on the students. A charitable reading of their insistence suggests they wanted their teachers to abide by high standards of fairness and impartiality. While a bias is often perceived as the opposite of objectivity, I will argue that (1) it is impossible to be free of biases and (2) biases are ingredients of objectivity.

Neutrality. A referee is called upon to be neutral in detecting infractions of the game rules. The instructor or teacher's role is considerably different from the referee's, partly because the teacher is an active participant in the quest for better descriptions, accounts, hypotheses, and explanations. A point of view can hardly be neutral. A bias is a slant or slope in one direction rather than another, which is true also of a hypothesis, description, or explanation. A bias need not be a pre-judgment. It can be the fruit of judgment. In some contexts, the word "biased" is properly used to mean "prejudiced." In the sense that I use it here, however, it is a belief or view strongly held. To be impartial and fair in evaluating rival theories or beliefs is not to be confused with holding to beliefs halfheartedly.

Objectivity is not academic asceticism devoted to purging the mind of all biases in the hope of arriving at a pristine *tabula rasa*. Biases are neither original sin to be washed away in the interest of restoring purity of mind nor societal corruptions of the naïve realism of a noble savage. Rather than view our biases as defilements to be flushed out so that the mind may recover its virginity and endemic innocence, we may treat them as our necessary *starting* points in rational inquiry. The human mind operates with a network of disposition and biases, most of which arrive as a legacy to be put to use, corrected, reworked or discarded, and often supplemented.

Objectivity as Twofold Openness. Openness to many relevant biases is essential to objectivity. Equally essential is openness to criticism. Objectivity is a regulative ideal approximated in degrees. It is more a social and perhaps an institutional process than a psychological state. Both brainwashing and education start with biases. The metaphor "brainwashing" refers to the process of closing off access to rival biases or perspectives, whereas education is the process of increasing access to rival and diverse biases, especially those that have been explicated. The closed society depends on brainwashing. The open society depends on open education, which explores *multiple biases* and cultivates *criticism*. The more in depth the exploratory inquiry becomes, the more it approximates the ideal of objectivity.

Indoctrination and Education. All education, I argue, begins with indoctrination. Without indoctrination in various subjects, the education process would never begin Critical thinking presupposes prior indoctrination. Indeed, critical thinking as a skill and discipline begins as indoctrination, and can even operate critically upon itself as well as on other materials in which we have been indoctrinated. Openness to criticism remains a mere abstraction until their exits content to criticize.

Critical Thinking and Comparative Biases. One way in which critical thinking (as a part of objective inquiry) comes into being is through the process of comparing the content and claims within diverse or competing biases. In short, while not guaranteeing the emergence of critical comparison, multiple indoctrinations do appear to increase its likelihood. Brainwashing is the process of preventing, or at least containing, multiple

indoctrinations and comparative criticism.

Fairness and Impartiality. Unlike the referee at a game, the teacher promotes fairness and impartiality by becoming more active as a participant in the biases. Specifically, fairness in the classroom increases when the teacher indoctrinates more thoroughly in the sense of presenting the materials in depth and from the perspective of the believers. This holds true whether the discipline is history, religion, political science, philosophy, or other subjects. Fairness is at least accurate representation of views from the perspective of those who embrace them. In some respects, it is as if temporarily the teacher has become a well-informed believer. In contrast to brainwashing, academic teaching encourages the teacher to become the temporary representative of a number of belief systems. He or she becomes, as it were, an informed and vigorous player for each team.

Objective Inquiry and Teaching the Bible. The public school teacher who teaches the Bible or portions of it must deal with those parents who want their children to be indoctrinated in the Bible from one and only one perspective. Other parents want their children to become acquainted with a range of perspectives.

The teacher who knowingly gives the impression that he or she is presenting "both sides" but shortchanges one of them is, of course, violating the code of fairness. The model that projects two and only two perspectives, however, is itself misleading. Biblical scholarship does not divide neatly into two "teams"--the believers in the Bible and the unbelievers. The adherents to position A are believers. The adherents to position B believers. If A and B are conflicting views, then each believer is also a skeptic. All believers are skeptics, and all skeptics are believers. Adherents to C might take elements from A and B and believe them while remaining skeptical of certain other elements of A and B. Adherents to D might find aspects of C highly fruitful and believable but other aspects mistaken or even misleading, and so on. The teacher who indoctrinates his or her students in multiple perspectives may or may not disclose his or her own perspective. In middle school and perhaps also high school, this approximation of impartiality can be accomplished by the teacher's skill in presenting *each* perspective as enthusiastically and convincingly as possible.

This approach to teaching, however, must not be confused with epistemic relativism. The difficult task will be that of reinforcing students to learn the content, structure, and logic of each perspective. For some teachers in middle school and high school, competent and accurate indoctrination into multiple perspectives would be a sufficient performance of their duty. The students will have been informed and their minds opened. Given the time limitations, this accomplishment might be all that could be expected.

Critical Thinking. If the teacher has provided some indication of how *internal* criticism of each perspective has developed, he or she will have begun to assist students in developing critical thinking about religious claims. Many students might then discover themselves engaging in *comparative* analysis. The objective teaching of the Bible in the classroom is not the teacher's providing the last word. It is, rather, the art and skill of indoctrinating students sufficiently to help them indoctrinate themselves more thoroughly and, in addition, develop the skills of *internal criticism and comparative analysis*. Rather than provide students with the ultimate word before they graduate, the classroom experience ideally serves to prepare them for participating in further adventures reaching beyond the classroom.

The Bible as Literature. Some teachers believe they can avoid becoming involved in heated epistemological and theological controversies by teaching the Bible as literature. Even this is easier said than done, especially if under the heading of "literature" falls such disciplines of criticism as source, reader, form, and redaction. These disciplines can be bypassed somewhat if the text under examination is treated as a completed literary unit. To be sure, the text will have the writer or redactor's own bias or agenda, which is usually more

than the presentation of an entertaining story. Some teachers find another advantage in teaching each biblical literary unit as literature only. They can usually avoid controversial issues raised by historical criticism. In other words, by not dealing with historical claims in biblical texts, the teacher says, in effect, "In this class, I do not deal with the historicity question as to whether the Red Sea actually parted, Elohim created of the heavens and the earth within a week, or a person named Jesus might or might not have raised dead Lazarus from the grave." The teacher may choose also to bypass the question of whether each biblical writer believed what he or she wrote. Indeed, the question itself raises another question: "In what sense did the writer believe it?" In his book *Did the Greek Believe in Their Myths?* Paul Veyne shows that this question is not always easy to answer. Even if the general populace in the days of Socrates and Plato believed in the existence of the ancient Greek gods, did the authors of the stories believe what they wrote? Believing *in* entails believing *that*. Did the Hebrew author of Exodus 33 believe *that* Yahweh had a face (which Moses was not permitted to see) and a back (which Moses was permitted to see)? If Yahweh has face and back, does he have kidneys, brain cells, and veins? In short, even if interpreters regard this Yahweh as a theophany, how does a theophany differ from a hologram? Are these questions a teacher might properly raise in class? If not, what is the criterion to guide teachers? Who is authorized to enforce the criterion? The debate over the criterion creates new epistemological issues in setting public policy.

A daring teacher might examine stories from, say, Genesis alongside Giulia Sissa and Marcel Detienn's *The Daily Life of the Greek Gods,* Miranda Aldhouse Green's *Dying for the Gods,* or James L. Krugel's *The God of Old: Inside the Lost World of the Bible*.

In middle school and high school, teachers of the Bible may see important similarities between themselves and teachers of other subjects. They indoctrinate their students sufficiently to generate abiding interest and prepare them to educate themselves in future years. The good and lucky teachers of the Bible may feel they have contributed to the long process of education that sails the challenging and sometimes troubling seas of critical thinking, leading far beyond the shores of elementary indoctrination.

Biographical Note

Joe E. Barnhart, a long-time participant in the ASSR-SW and SWCRS meetings, is recently retired from the University of North Texas where he served as Professor of Philosophy and Religion Studies`. Author of hundreds of scholarly articles, books, and other media throughout his career, he was awarded the John Gammie Distinguished Scholar Award from the SWCRS in 2006. He and his wife now reside in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Mysticism, Reformation, and the Will to Power: A Comparative Examination of Chidester's *Christianity: A Global History* and Cioran's *Tears and Saints*

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One of the most intriguing and often least satisfactorily explainable phenomena in the history of the Christian Tradition is that of mysticism. Mysticism, generally defined as the spiritual intuition of truths transcending earthly understanding, has been described by David Chidester in Christianity: A Global History as an awakening of "an intimate experience of loving union with Jesus Christ" in those who had received the Heavenly gift of "ecstasy" (237). One of the early inspirations for the rise of Christian mysticism was a text entitled Mystical Theology composed by Dionysius the Areopagite who proclaimed that true spiritual understanding was beyond mere "language, concepts, and perceptions" (*via negativa*) and required instead, a complete immersion into God's "truly mysterious darkness of unknowing" (Chidester 237). Hence, a complete and ascetic rejection of earthly life was necessary to fulfill the journey toward mystical Christian revelation. Later, Origen (the ancient theologian) developed the allegory of bride and bridegroom—the lover and the beloved—to describe the relationship between the church and Christ, between God and Christ (his son), and between God and man. As a result, two themes emerged as central to fulfill mystical experience—"the ascent of the soul to God, and the intimacy of the soul with Christ" (Chidester 238). The themes of love, light, and nothingness echoed Dionysius' original inspiration of an attainable "brilliant darkness" that foretold of mystical experience to come in Christendom (Chidester 237).

Still, the questions of who received such mystical abilities and experiences, when, and perhaps more importantly, why, were left unanswered. Perhaps because questioning Godly revelations, miracles, and the deep spiritual devotion of those graced with such abilities would have been considered sinful (or even heretical), mysticism was accepted as being just what it was—revelations of spiritual truth through mediums chosen for their devotion, dedication, and self-sacrifice to God and Christ. Their status among Christians rose dramatically (many would later be granted sainthood), and their asceticism and presence were convincing that spiritual forces were everywhere. Belief, devotion, and adherence to the words of the one God (and Jesus) were the result of this display of spiritual mysticism. Those who were the mystics were those who had been granted great power from God and perhaps for themselves as well.

One of the most modern thought-provoking (and at the time of its publication, controversial) books concerning mysticism in the Christian Tradition is Emile Cioran's Tears and Saints. As Chidester (in his Christian history) recognizes that "in the development of medieval Christian spirituality in the West, women played a dominant role" (248), Cioran concurs, but also seeks to more fully answer the "why" question. According to Chidester, "the monastic environment provided scope for women to emerge as leaders in the theory and practice of mysticism." He specifically mentions the expansive Beguine movement of the early 13th century composed of women whose lifestyle included the renunciation of property, sex, and marriage that left these single women (who usually lived at home) relatively free of male-domination. Their devotion, purity, and service to God (outside of the convent) gained them papal recognition as a religious order in 1216.

Cioran holds a similar view, but with different reasoning. He viewed the mystics as women who were seeking love— in fact, the greatest love of all. Since Jesus was a man, it is not surprising that women were more often drawn to mystical experience. As Cioran

states: “Many saints—but especially saintly women—confessed a desire to rest their head on the heart of Jesus. They all had their wish fulfilled” (4). “The answer saintly women gave whenever their parents begged them to marry was invariably the same: they could not marry because they had promised Jesus their maidenhood” (39).

Just as Jesus is the husband and lover of the mystic female, she suffers his death just as He. Cioran wrote that Jesus’ “cross had fallen apart and fell into the soul” of the mystic and “its nails bore into their hearts all their life, not just for a few hours on a hill” (39). Pain and suffering is the mystic’s burden also. Just as the old adage states that there is only a fine line between pleasure and pain, so too is there between ecstasy and suffering. As Christ died to redeem the sins of mankind, mystics and saints must experience the suffering of Christ to experience the ecstasy associated with his love and salvation. For the ordinary person perhaps “a little suffering is good for the soul” but for the mystic, like Margaret-Mary Alacoque, “None of my sufferings has been equal to that of not having suffered enough” (Cioran 12).

Cioran proclaims, “Ecstasy replaces sexuality” (19) and “[t]he mystics cultivate a heavenly sensuality, a voluptuousness born of their intercourse with the sky…yet their troubled lives are not *biographies* because they are one-dimensional, variations on a single theme: absolute passion” (7). According to Cioran, “Suffering is man’s only biography; its *voluptuousness*, the saint’s” (9).

In Tears and Saints, Cioran relates the stories of three particular mystics and their individual sufferings. “Catherine of Siena”, he says, “lived only on communion bread” as “communion, that tiny piece of Heaven is infinitely more nutritious than earthly food…Voluntary hunger is a road to Heaven” (11). She also experienced Jesus approaching her and removing her heart through the left side of her body, after which she told everyone she was living without a heart (apparently symbolically removing sin, evil, impurity, and humanness). Jesus returned several days later and “transplanted” His heart into her so that she could live again through him (symbolically instilling purity, innocence, agape, and spiritual perfection).

Teresa of Avila suffered a wound of a spear of love through her heart (much like Jesus’ side being pierced by a Roman soldier (often said to be named Longinus). At the age of six, she read the lives of the saints and shortly thereafter unsuccessfully, but at great personal risk, attempted to convert the Arabs to Christianity (Cioran 4).

Rose of Lima, a young, beautiful girl, would not venture out into the town with her mother, desiring to be alone with God at all times. After much concern, she found a way to still be alone when with others. She placed a sharp needle under a crown of flowers “that pricked her forehead incessantly.” One conquers the temptation of the world through pain” (Cioran 9). Rose of Lima also wore a crown of nails under her veil from time to time—nails so sharp that anyone who touched her head caused blood to stream down her face (mimicking the “tears” of the Virgin Mary upon the crucifixion of Jesus). She also denied herself sleep in excess of two hours a night. If she felt that “sleep was overpowering her, she would hang herself to a cross in her room, or force herself to stand by tying her hair to a nail” (Cioran 10).

These accounts brought to light by Cioran in Tears and Saints are examples of either a real and deep spiritual connection to God and Christ, psychotic episodes in the personalities of a few people with disorders, or practices that were attempts to gain devotees, attract attention, exert control, increase social, political, and spiritual power, reactions to a changing spiritual landscape, or some combination of all of these possibilities. Cioran speculates the latter. He does not deny that the mystics (or saints) were actually devoted spiritual servants, dedicated to the spread of Christianity (at least in the form of Catholicism) and the purity of heart to render ecstasy. There is also a case to be made for psychosis—as Cioran states, “Saintliness is a form of madness…Saints live in flames; wise

men, next to them" (10, 14). But as psychotic (by modern standards) as the suffering of mystics may seem to ordinary people, there is a certain psychological goal that may be fulfilled through such actions—control. Just as many people (again, primarily younger women) engage in eating or cutting (self-mutilating) disorders, the reason is usually to exert control. As Cioran writes, "While the madness of mortals exhausts itself in useless and fantastic actions, holy madness is a conscious effort toward winning everything (10). Could saints have a will to power? Is their world imperialistic? The answer is yes… While we waste our energy in the struggle for temporary gains, their great pride makes them aspire to absolute possession. For them, the space to conquer is the sky, and their weapon, suffering" (45).

Thus, mystics held conquering power, they were revered by the masses of their faiths, they gained attention and publicity, and they were able to hold their audience and devotees through what Dostoevsky determined to be (in his famous "The Grand Inquisitor" chapter of The Brothers Karamazov) the power of Spanish Catholicism (during the time of the Inquisition) as "miracle, mystery, and authority" (257).

Still, according to Cioran as well as Chidester, the practice of mysticism is found in greater quantities during times of religious upheaval and reform, such as the Reformation. These were the times like those of Luther and Calvin yet also the times of the mystics and the Inquisitors. As Chidester remarks in his History, mystics like Ignatius of Loyola and Teresa of Avila received the calling to preach the Gospel to Muslims utilizing the *devotio moderna*, stressing the inner-life and meditation to become closer to God. It was during this time that "in the internal space of the imagination, the sacred was present in vivid images that evoked religious thought and emotion" (Chidester 328). Through such activities, the mystics "had a profound impact on revitalizing a Catholic spirituality of images," something the new Protestants had opposed stringently (Chidester 329). Likewise, Cioran believes that mysticism occurs as a response to a profound dissatisfaction with the world as it exists. He proclaims that "*Everything* must have been *once*…History does not repeat itself; yet it seems as if our lives are caught in the reflections of a past world…" (39). "For every man, God is his first memory…Saintly meditation is an imprisonment in original memory" (18).

The longing for a society of the past—a mystical golden age—a paradise like the Garden of Eden is the ideal each Christian strives to re-attain—a "paradise regained"—either in this world or the next. According to Cioran, the mystics found a changing world becoming more and more removed from man's earthly paradise. The mystic, seeing his or her world as it is, must close their eyes to it (*via negativa*) not acknowledging the realities of earth, for it may affect their perceptions of God. As Cioran states, "I love saints for their *passionate naiveté*…eyes always half-closed [to] protect the inner mystery from the indiscretion of external light…Why should they open their eyes on the world when they have all said repeatedly that they only have eyes for Jesus? Ecstasy closes eyes; in it one *is* what one *sees*" (20).

With new religious movements, conflicts, and turmoil, it is not surprising that those professing to be graced with mystical abilities would arise to restore, regain, and recapture their faiths. They attempted to exert control not only over their own lives in an increasingly diverse religious world, but to give others a reason to renew their beliefs in original doctrine. Their "will to power," as Cioran writes, was personal but directed as a control of their belief, and suffering was used not only as a method to receive vision and ecstasy, but to refocus their following onto the true Godly virtues in which they passionately believed. The tears of the past—at the crucifixion of Jesus—would always be the reminder of all in Christendom of what had transpired in history regarding sin and salvation. It is no surprise that the answer to almost all questions surrounding the mystics can be found in relation to the end (salvation). It is Cioran's beginning, as he writes:

> As I searched for the origin of tears, I thought of the saints. Could they be the

> source of tears' bitter light? Who can tell?...Tears did not enter this world through the saints; but without them we would have never known that we cry because we long for a lost paradise. Show me a single tear swallowed up by the earth! No, by paths unknown to us, they all go upwards. Pain comes before tears. But the saints rehabilitated them. (3)

Biographical Note

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Clergy Sense-Making Behavior and the Sermon Preparation Task

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Abstract: The paper presents Dervin's Sense-Making Theory as a useful interpretative framework for the qualitative analysis of the process by which a clergy member approaches the weekly task of sermon preparation. The subject matter is approached from the perspective of the library and information science field and focuses on the information seeking and use behavior of the informant. The paper describes the details and benefits of the research methodology for its depth of findings.

Introduction

In any given week, an estimated 20% to 40% of the people who live in the United States attend a religious worship service (Newport, 2004; Hardaway & Marler, 1998). Persons who attend Christian worship services expect the pastor to be competent in preaching and in "relating faith to the modern world," defined as "sensitive interpreting, and teaching the gospel in contemporary life" (Schuller, Strommen, & Brekke, 1980, p. 41). The definition of a sermon is a discourse delivered or preached within the context of a worship service which explains a text of a Bible passage or which instructs on matters of faith and morals (Meagher, et al., 1979, p. 3261).

The author makes several assumptions. One, when contemporary clergy members are in the situation of needing to interpret Scripture for the Sunday sermon, they face a chronological gap of sixteen hundred years between contemporary times and Biblical times. Two, the Holy Bible, is a static document the contents of which have not changed for sixteen hundred years. Three, in order to be true to the Scripture text, the contemporary clergy member must research the historical, social, and political contexts in order to ascertain the original purpose and intent of the Scripture text. Four, the differences in interpretation of Scripture from one clergy member to another is a matter of individual contextual factors such as education, doctrinal position, experience, denominational affiliation, and more.

The primary question that guided the paper was "What is the information seeking and use behavior of a clergy member regarding the interpretation of Scripture for preparing a weekly sermon?" The author sought to answer this question by focusing on three particular aspects of the sermon preparation process:

1. The selection of a Biblical text from which to preach.
2. The role of the informant's contextual situation in the decisions made regarding the interpretive contents and overall direction of the sermon.
3. The goals that the informant hoped to accomplish with the sermon.

The questions recognize that the clergy member is free to choose the information to research, interpret, and present in the form of a sermon. Such an arrangement places the clergy member in a position of considerable power and influence over those who hear the sermon. The author sought to discover how a clergy member dealt with the opportunities and responsibilities of this situation in terms of the scripture texts or topics selected for the sermon.

Each sermon is a unique interpretation even when clergy members are from the same denomination, have comparable levels of education, and are preaching on the same text from the Bible. The author sought to discover how the various attributes of a clergy member's life context affect the process by which he interprets Scripture in the sermon preparation process.

The contents of a sermon can be a simple reinforcement of the particular positions

and doctrines of the Christian faith in general or a denomination in particular so that the sermon tells the audience what to believe. The sermon can be an examination of a particular issue from different perspectives so that members of the sermon audience are encouraged to come to their own conclusions and to articulate what they believe to be true for themselves. These are but two of many different possible goals that a clergy member might have for a sermon. The author sought to discover the goals of a clergy member in the sermon preparation and delivery process.

Sense-Making Theory as the Interpretive Framework

In the last 30 years, the field of library and information science has moved towards a new research paradigm that seeks to replace the traditional research perspective of information as having constant meaning and absolute nature independent of the information seeker. The new understanding of information is as something constructed by the information seeker from a unique situation of need. The traditional research perspective attempts to discover information user behavior that applies across multiple physical situations. The new research paradigm recognizes that information users operate from unique situations in time or situational moments. The traditional research perspective focuses on how information users intersect with information systems. The new research paradigm focuses on information user behavior both within and without information systems to examine behavior outside of system constraints (Dervin and Nilan, 1986).

Dervin's Sense-Making theory is one of several interpretive frameworks used by the field of library and information science to conduct research in the new paradigm. The fundamental principle of Sense-Making theory is that gaps exist in the planes of time and space between people, their moments in history, and geographical locations. These gaps are a constant condition of what it means to be human (Dervin 1991). Each human being moves through his or her life on a unique path of time and space and experiences the world as no other person has done before or ever will again. Every individual who hears a sermon on any given Sunday will hear, see, feel, understand, accept, or reject it in a unique and different way from every other person. Similarly, each week every individual clergy member prepares a sermon in a unique way because each clergy member is at a different time and place with each experience of sermon preparation.

The Sense-Making metaphor presented in Figure 1 illustrates the challenge facing the clergy member. With each sermon, a gap confronts the clergy member between his moment in history and the moment of those persons who lived in Biblical times, who created the stories passed from generation to generation for many hundreds of years before the stories were put to pen and paper. Because the clergy member is unable to communicate with those persons for clarification of original meaning and actual events, the clergy member must decide how to interpret the Scriptures in a world that is radically different from that of Biblical times. While all clergy members face the same historical gap between Biblical and contemporary times, each clergy member faces the gap from a unique situation constructed of individual experiences, education, and beliefs.

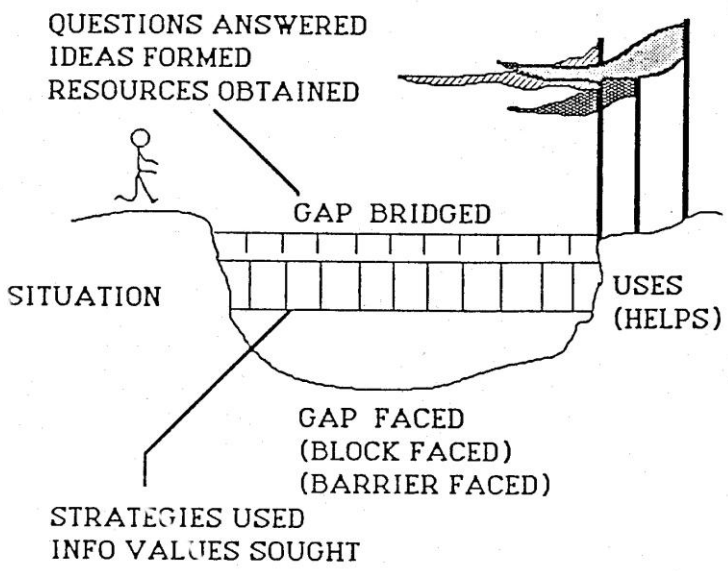

Figure 1. The Sense-Making metaphor (Dervin, 1992, p. 68).

Sense-Making theory defines an information need as a situation in which "the individual's internal sense has run out" (Dervin & Nilan, 1986, p. 21) and a need for new sense has emerged. In this situation, the individual faces a gap or a "stop" in knowledge and must engage in particular forms of behavior such as observing, thinking, creating ideas, comparing, contrasting, rejecting, talking, agreeing, and disagreeing. These behaviors are the building materials used to construct a bridge across the gap so that the individual can continue on the journey with the knowledge necessary to keep moving in the chosen direction (Dervin, 1991, p. 64).

Sense-Making theory holds that institutional and individual a priori instruction, socialization, and hegemony influences thinking and the potential to create ideas, but such traditions may not be enough to bridge every gap that individuals encounter in their journey through time and space (Dervin, 1999). This premise is vital in that clergy members must function and travel through life in a mode that requires drawing on individual knowledge, experience and decision making abilities, as well as belief in things unseen and unproven, which require faith. Full ordination as a clergy member in a particular denomination usually follows only upon completion of an extensive seminary education, a probationary period of socialization with fellow clergy, and demonstration of acceptance of denominational hegemony. The ordination ceremony includes a public affirmation of faith in the existence of a divine entity, life after death, and a spiritual dimension to life.

The maintaining of faith is a challenge for even the most devoted of clergy members. The author sought to discover what affect faith has on information seeking and use behavior. Wicks (1999) observed that when a clergy member's theology intersects with preaching, the likely result is a closed information system. This means that the clergy tend to limit the use of information resources to those that are in line with their theological system, presumably to keep themselves strong in their faith, to shore themselves up in times of potential doubt (p. 211).

A final premise of Sense-Making theory that informs the paper holds that knowledge or information, is essentially mappings of reality generated in a particular time and space and formalized by a particular power system (Dervin, 1999). This premise speaks to Wicks' (1999) findings of the influence of the seminary education and indoctrination that prepares clergy for becoming ordained members of a particular denomination.

In summary, the author utilized the interpretive framework of Sense-Making theory in order to discover the gaps or stops that a clergy member encountered in interpreting Scripture for the sermon preparation process. These gaps include initiating the process with the decision to preach from a particular text or topic; the content of the sermons were considered, then included or discarded; the desired goal for the sermon; and how the contextual situation of the clergy member potentially affects each Sense-Making step in the process. Through listening to the live and recorded delivery of the sermons and in-depth interviews, the author identified and classified the behavior in which the informant engaged when faced with a situation needing new sense. Analysis of the data yielded opportunities to explore with the informant instances in which seminary education, age, experience, denominational socialization, and doctrinal hegemony may have affected his Sense-Making behavior. Instances of resistance to the theological world in the consideration of new interpretations received similar attention.

A sense-making model for sermon preparation

The informant engaged in a consistent pattern of sense-making behavior similar to members of author professions such as financial auditors, architects, and engineers (Cheuk, 1998, Cheuk and Dervin, 1999). Cheuk developed a seven-stage model of sense-making behavior for routine task completion (1999). A similar model emerged from the data for the current paper. The current author intends to test the model with additional case studies of clergy members from different denominations and life contexts.

A Sense-Making model for clergy members engaged in the routine task of Scripture interpretation and sermon preparation:

1. Start with the Lectionary readings
2. Do the research – What is this saying?
    a. Scripture interprets Scripture
    b. Original Biblical languages
    c. Denominational doctrine
    d. Church history
    e. Participate in a text study group
3. Let the Word speak
4. Follow and/or struggle with the guidance of the Holy Spirit
    a. Draw upon personal experience
    b. Attending to external resources such as media
    c. Do I really want to go there?
5. Develop a sermon theme
6. Consider how the congregation will respond

Step 1: Start with the Lectionary readings

In all three of the unstructured reflections on preparations for the sermon of the previous Sunday, the informant articulated starting with reading of the Lectionary texts. The informant articulated a preference and the tendency to prepare sermons based on the Gospel lesson. This finding, then, relates to the first aspect of the sermon preparation process in that the Lectionary readings determine the selection of a Biblical text from which to prepare the Sunday sermon.

Large majorities of clergy members from Lutheran, Presbyterian, and United Methodist denominations report use of the Lectionary for selecting Scripture texts for sermon preparation all or most of the time (The Association of Religious Data Archives, U.S. Congregational Life Survey, 2001). Based on statistics from denominational websites, an estimated 40,000 members of the clergy in just these three denominations begin their

weekly sermon preparation with the Lectionary readings.

The next three steps of the model relate to the second aspect of the sermon preparation process: the role of the clergy member's contextual situation in the decisions made regarding the interpretative contents and overall direction of the sermon. The primary contextual factor for the informant is the college and seminary education required for ordained ministry within his denomination. Extensive studies in Biblical interpretation, Biblical languages, and church doctrine set the foundation for particular practices and principles by which the informant operates when interpreting Scripture for sermon preparation.

Step 2: Do the research

The informant considers Scripture to be the primary resource for answers to every question pertaining to how one should live his or her life. Scripture provides clear guidelines for personal behavior and for relationships with others. The informant acknowledged that Scripture contains many contradictions. For example, the Biblical law that allows for the taking of an eye for the loss of an eye and the taking of a tooth for the loss of a tooth (May, H. and Metzger, B., 1977, p. 153, Leviticus 24:19-20) is contradicted by the teaching of Jesus to turn the other cheek (May, H. and Metzger, B., 1977, p. 1177, Matthew 5:38-39). In such situations, the four books of Scripture known as the Gospels provide the definitive direction in an interpretive method articulated by the informant as Scripture interpreting Scripture.

The informant articulates this method as "you cannot take one passage [of Scripture] and run with it … in ways that are contrary to the spirit of the rest of Scripture". By way of illustration, the informant described what he considered an incorrect use of Scripture:

> "Say that for instance, that someone becomes a leader and who advocates that as God led the people of Israel into Canaan and told them to just decimate everybody there and not leave a living person. That this is God's command to us to go into the Middle East or whatever and make that into a god-fearing land, to take that land and do with it as God told the Israelites to do and we have got all this trouble because they did not do what God told them, they did not completely eliminate all the, uh [inhabitants] (May, H. and Metzger, B., 1977, p. 210, Numbers 33:55-56). I think that Scripture would indicate that something as blatant as that is not what Jesus commanded his disciples to do when he said to 'Go and make disciples of all nations'".

The first three sub-steps for doing the research are directly related to the seminary education of the informant. The possibility exists for common applicability to clergy members of other denominations which also require seminary education for ordination. A minimum number of hours in the study of Biblical languages and denominational polity are also typically required. The final two sub-steps listed are more a matter of the personal preferences of the informant, but may also be common among many clergy members.

Step 3: Let the Word speak

The Word of God is understood to be a living thing and the criteria for ordination as a clergy member is evidence of hearing, obeying, and proclaiming the Word of God. While not specifically articulated, there is the implication of a relationship between the informant and the living Word just as real and requiring nurture and devotion for the informant as a relationship with any significant other in his life.

In the first unstructured reflective interview, the informant articulated a ritual of devotion practiced at the beginning of each day, which he describes as lifting one's spirits and one's thoughts to God. One detects a sense of fulfillment, confidence, and purpose resonating in the words of the informant both in the interviews of the current study and in his

sermons, which he seems intent on passing on to those who would hear his sermons.

Step 4: Follow and/or struggle with the guidance of the Holy Spirit

Cheuk and Dervin described the Sense-making stop category, Being led, as "Waiting for authoritative approval to proceed" (1999, Figure 3) to come from the informant's supervisor, manager, or client. Being led for the informant in the current study is described as waiting for the direction of the Holy Spirit.

The sermon preparation process is seen as being directly affected by the Holy Spirit. The role of the Holy Spirit is not to dictate each word of the sermon, but rather to remove the veil of misunderstanding and misinterpretation to reveal the theme and message that needs to be spoken to in the particular situation of the informant and the congregation. Directions perceived as coming from the Holy Spirit are checked against Scripture and Gospel mandate for love of neighbor.

A potential dilemma exists, however, when Scripture and church doctrine do not specifically address a controversial issue or question. The question of homosexuality was mentioned in the third sermon of the informant and became a significant topic of discussion in the research interviews. While Scripture includes a very few references to homosexuality, they are rather vague and open to interpretation, and the question is not addressed at all in the Gospels, nor in the Book of Concord. The authority of Scripture fails to provide the necessary help to make sense in this situation so that another help or aid must be found and used in order to make sense of the situation. For the informant, this help/aid is the Holy Spirit.

On one occasion the informant articulated awareness of a controversy created by the comments of a television personality and felt led to speak to the controversy in a sermon. A couple of other occasions within the interviews indicated an awareness of the informant on the potential influence and impact of the media on the lives of his church members, especially in terms of televangelists, which resulted in speaking to particular points of Lutheran theology and doctrine perhaps as reaffirmation and reassurance for the congregation.

To struggle with the Holy Spirit, with Scripture, with the Gospel, to understand God's will is not necessarily seen as a bad thing by the informant, but rather as something that God intends and that which makes the faith journey more fun.

Step 5: Develop a sermon theme

The informant used the word "theme" sixteen times in eight different interviews during the course of the study. He used the word in all three of the unstructured reflective interviews focusing on sermon preparation and he articulated the development of a theme for the sermon as ordinary step usually accomplished by the middle of the week.

The purpose and importance of a sermon theme as being helpful in the communication process with the congregation was rather taken for granted by both the informant and the researcher throughout the course of the interviews. However, the development of a theme is a critical step in the preparation of the sermon, akin to a watershed moment from which the sermon message flows and develops toward fruition. Sometimes the sermon theme "jumps out" to the informant, sometimes it comes only after a time of reflection and "rumbling things around in my mind" and sometimes the theme has a long history in need of a new application to a current situation.

Step 6: Consider how the congregation will respond

The informant articulated experiencing at times a tension between being true to the Word and the possible reaction of the congregation. While a possible correlation between this tension and the informant's experience and awareness of how some pastors were

"hounded out of their parishes" during the mid-1970's was not specifically pursued, one could not live through such troubling times and not be affected.

The informant articulated that the denominational structure of the ELCA is congregational, so that once an offer is made by a congregation to and accepted by a clergy member to serve as the pastor of that congregation, the clergy member as "pretty much complete say" as to how long he or she wants to remain as the pastor. However, a clergy member "who gets on the wrong side of the members of their congregation will probably find life very uncomfortable."

Conclusion

The informant articulates the sermon preparation process as a collaborative effort with the Holy Spirit. This collaborative effort establishes connectivity that overcomes the gaps of time, place, and worldviews between the contemporary clergy member and the long line of prophets, preachers, and priests from Biblical times onward who have heard and spoken the living Word of God.

Dervin writes,

> "Sense-Making assumes that there are myriad ways that human beings have individually and collectively verbed their worlds, in adaptation, response, resistance, creativity, challenge, and invention. This, in turn, implies that in attempting to understand the human condition Sense-Making admits all manner of connectivities and patterns, not just causalities but spontaneities, simultaneities, temporalities, collaboralities, and so on. This includes not just connectivities that imply anchorings in the real (e.g., factizings, experiencings, or structurings) but those that imply soarings beyond (e.g., narratings, fantasyings, or imaginings)" (2003, p. 145).

The author concludes that the informant verbs his world, especially the sermon preparation process, in such a way that combines connectivities both anchored in the real and which soar beyond the real by faith.

Biographical Note

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What's Emptiness Got To Do With It? Delving Beneath the Surface of Tibetan Buddhist Ritual

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I. Introduction

Of the fundamental changes in Buddhism that the Mahāyāna tradition made to the Theravāda school one of the most defining was the addition of the fourth universal mark,[1] *śūnyatā* or emptiness.[2] The notion of *sunyata* is integral to understanding any Buddhist school of the Mahāyāna tradition which began 100 BCE to 100 CE The teaching of emptiness began with the Śūnyavādins who added *śūnyatā,* or emptiness, as the fourth of the three universal marks of suffering (*duhkha*). Śūnyavādins define *śūnyatā* as the absence of own-being (*svabhāva)*. *Svabhāva* is defined as 1) existing of its own power rather than that of another 2) possessing an invariant and inalienable mark and 3) having immutable essence. Through this logic everything is classified as *śūnyatā* − even the Dharma. *Śūnyatā* is not simply a negation of *svabhāva*, and it is not necessarily "nothingness." *Śūnyatā* surpasses *svabhāva*. It is meant to clear wrong view from the mind so that reality is apparent. It does so by repudiating binary thinking.

Within Tibetan Buddhism, though still part of the Mahāyāna tradition, the element of *śūnyatā* seems to be missing. It is a Tantric tradition that has flourished since the eighth century. The traditional Tibetan belief is that the power for good is within ritual, yet it employs rituals erotic in nature and invokes deities who advise adherents thus:

> You should slay living beings.
> You should speak lying words.
> You should take what is not given.
> You should frequent others' wives.[3]

This advice seems to counter the teachings of the Mahāyāna tradition as it was considered the "Great Vehicle" through which all beings could attain enlightenment by becoming bodhisattvas. As Yatin Dave states in his article "*Śūnyatā* and the Bodhisattva," within Mahāyāna "emptiness and bodhisattva are contingent upon one another."[4] The search for emptiness would seem to be absent in these Tibetan rituals.

II. Emptiness

The concept of emptiness is well explained in a famous pictorial representation entitled *The Ox and His Herdsman* originating from the Zen school. This illustration of the path to self-realization, or path of the bodhisattva, presents ten frames in which the herdsman is depicted as the individual on the quest for the true self. The herdsman is featured alone and searching in the first two depictions. The figure of the ox, symbolizing the self, appears in drawings three through six as the herdsman discovers, tames, and rides it. The seventh drawing shows the herdsman alone in meditation representing the stage of attainment toward liberation. Next is the eighth stage, the stage on which we want to primarily focus. All that is presented in this stage is an empty circle, representing the self's

[1] The original universal marks of the Theravāda tradition are suffering (*duhkha*), impermanence (*anitya*), and no-self (*anātman*).
[2] Robinson, Richard H. and Willard L. Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion*, 89
[3] Olson, Carl, *Original Buddhist Studies*, 235
[4] Yatin Dave, "*Śūnyatā* and the Bodhisattva," *The Middle Way: journal of the Buddhist Society*, 79

freedom from the ego.[5] The text accompanying the circle reads:

> All world desires have fallen away, and at the same time the meaning of holiness has become completely empty. Do not linger where the Buddha dwells. Go quickly past the place where no Buddha dwells…
> With one blow the vast sky suddenly breaks into pieces.
> Holy, worldly, both vanished without a trace.

In effect, the concept of emptiness represented here is used to surpass duality but should not be considered nihilistic or an existence on its own. In the words of Ueda Shizuteru, "In Buddhism, absolute nothingness does not mean that nothing at all exists. It is rather supposed to free one from substantializing thinking and from a substatializing apprehension of the self." Out of this nothingness that negates negation and out of this no-mind comes the selfless self that in its own truth becomes one and all simultaneously. Unlike the Tibetan school, Zen gives a very clear picture of its understanding of emptiness. Whereas Zen is a philosophical tradition that utilizes argumentation, the Tibetan school is of the Vajrayana or Tantric practice which stands primarily on ritual. There are few explicit references to emptiness in the Tibetan school, which is partially due to the directive nature of the documents, produced for ritualistic practice. Yet as suggested by Shizuteru, this concept is integral to any Buddhism of the Mahāyāna tradition. Though the Tibetan school is based on some of the same teachings as Zen, the concept of emptiness remains a component of Tibetan Buddhism which should be investigated. Thus, in this essay, we investigate whether the concept of emptiness appears in the practices and writings of Tibetan Buddhism as it appears in Nagarjuna's *Fundamentals of the Middle Way*, a foundational text in the Mahāyāna school. We begin by examining the earlier tradition.

III. Nagarjuna

Nagarjuna, the Mahāyāna monk who founded the now extinct Madyamika school of Buddhism, was the first to write down a philosophy of emptiness. In *Fundamentals,* Nagarjuna reveals knowledge that was considered to be secret teachings of the Buddha. These teachings propose a transcendental path between eternalism and nihilism. Nagarjuna explains, "'It is' is a notion of eternity. 'It is not' is a nihilistic view. Therefore, one who is wise does not have recourse into 'being' and 'nonbeing'".[6] To describe this middle path Nagarjuna first demonstrates the interdependence of things using the analogy of the relationship between fire and fuel. Each requires the other for its own existence, thereby rendering each essentially empty. This basic emptiness discounts thought as a path to liberation thereby simultaneously discounting the Theravada Buddhist tradition and anticipating the path of the Yogācāra school in categorizing thought as an additional one of the senses. In this view, meditation and ritual become the act of clearing thoughts from the mind. This aids in a perception of emptiness in which "the domain of thought is nonexistent [and] that which can be stated is nonexistent."[7] Nagarjuna also discriminates between two kinds of truth. "The teaching of the Buddha about the Dharma is grounded in two truths: a truth of world convention and an ultimate truth."[8]

As Nagarjuna states, the ultimate truth consists of "things which are unoriginated and are not terminated."[9] As an ultimate truth he posits that *śūnyatā* is "whatever is originating

[5] Ueda Shizuteru, "Emptiness and Fullness: *Śūnyatā* in Mahāyāna Buddhism," *Eastern Buddhist*, 15
[6] Olson, Carl, *Original Buddhist Studies*, 203
[7] Olson, 206
[8] Olson, 208
[9] Olson, 206

dependently" in accordance with the demonstration of fire and fuel.[10] He expresses that an intuitive understanding of *śūnyatā* is the key to reaching liberation: "For him who denies emptiness there is no arising."[11] Nagarjuna also warns that "by misperceiving emptiness, an unintelligent person is completely destroyed."[12] Using this theory he also proposes that nirvana and samsara are one in the same: "The extreme limit of nirvana is also the extreme limit of cyclic existence; there is not the slightest bit of difference between them."[13] As a grand finale he discounts his own religion in an effort to prove his point, for if everything is empty, so are the teachings of the Buddha. Nagarjuna states, "No Dharma anywhere has been taught by the Buddha about anything, at any Time, in any place, to any person."[14] Shizuteru eloquently opines on this matter: "One's ultimate religious concern here is to abandon even one's own religion" just as Nagarjuna has done.[15]

IV. Tibetan Buddhism

Nagarjuna's Mādyamika represents a philosophical form of Buddhism representative of the Mahāyāna school. Tibetan Buddhism is also a form of Mahāyāna, but it is based almost entirely on a variety of rituals that are expedient means of gaining enlightenment for those who are ready. The Tibetan school began with Vajrayana or Tantric Buddhism in the frontier lands and drew from local magic and occult practices. In 515 CE the city of Kashmir was a center of Buddhist learning, but was sacked by the Huns. A new ruler revived Tibetan Buddhism in the seventh and eighth centuries. At this time Buddhism was still dependent on royal patronage, so when support dwindled so did the religion. Yet Tibetan Buddhism survived in remote valleys bordering Tibet in spite of the eventual lack of support. Due to the ritualistic nature of the school, most of the related literature explains rituals or methods of meditation.

Within the rituals of Tibetan Buddhism there is little mention of emptiness. For example, the Hevajra advises, "Take a girl of the Vajra-family, fair-featured and large eyed and endowed with youth and beauty, who has been consecrated by oneself and is possessed of a compassionate disposition, and with her the practice should be performed."[16] This directive, particularly the description of the girl's appearance seems little meant for spiritual gain. "The practice" that she will help in performing lives up to the Western perceptions of Tantra. A rather descriptive account of this practice is provided in the *Candamahārosana Tantra*, a document directing the ritual practice which was most likely meant to be kept secret due to its erotic content and breaking of taboos. Another passage in the Hevajra which seems at first to be far from spiritual contains the following requirements for the yogin performing the ritual:

"The yogin must wear the sacred ear-rings, and the circlet on his head; on his wrists the bracelets, and the girdle round his waist, rings around his ankles, bangles round his arms; he wears the bone-necklace and for his dress a tiger-skin, and his food must be the five ambrosias."[17]

At first glance this does not seem like a prescription for emptiness, however, the next line

[10] Olson, 209
[11] Olson, 209
[12] Olson, 208
[13] Olson, 212
[14] Olson, 212
[15] Shizuteru, 13
[16] Olson, 227
[17] Olson, 227

reads, "He who practices the yoga of Heruka should frequent the five classes."[18] This begins to more closely follow the path of the bodhisattvas as it continues, "These five classes that are associated together, he conceives of as one, for by him no distinction is made between one class or many." One may assume that the classes in question are those of a caste system. Indeed, a bodhisattva charged with the liberation of all beings would need to adopt such an outlook. On the topic of emptiness, it can be found within this passage. The merge of the classes is beyond disparate thinking. This passage winds up by exemplifying the concept of emptiness as it illumines unity.

Returning to the description of the jewelry which must be worn by the participant in the *Hevajra*, while it seems at first to be a superficial practice, the use of the jewelry is actually presented as symbolic later in the passage: "Aksobya is symbolized by the circlet, Amitābha by the ear-rings, Ratnesa by the necklace, and Vairocana (by the rings) upon the wrists."[19] The passage continues in explaining the symbolism in each garment and instrument used in the ceremony, each representing a deity. The very presence of deities within a tradition that does not recognize a god and argues for emptiness is at first curious. In regard to these deities such as Yama, the Lord and Judge of the Dead, used in the Tibetan practice one reads in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, "The Yama-deities are your own hallucinations and themselves are forms of the void… Voidness cannot harm voidness." It also advises, "You should recognize that there is nothing other than your own hallucination. There is no external, substanitially existent Yama, angel, demon, or bull-headed ogre, and so on."[20] With this the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* does just as Shizuteru states one must do and what Nagarjuna himself did at the end of Fundamentals: it denies its own religious practice as it is not the religion itself that is the point. It is the emptiness towards which the religion points its adherents.

The concept does, in fact, remain an underlying philosophy. Along with ritualistic practices, meditation is also a part of Tibetan Buddhism. In this tradition meditation concerns eliminating the mind. In Tsong Khapa's *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* he advises, "By eradicating the cognitive process in which ignorance reifies things, you produce a powerful certainty about emptiness − the absence of intrinsic existence."[21] One mantra meant for meditation reveals that emptiness is as a concern is: "Om ṣūnyatā-jñāna-vajra-svabhāvātmako 'ham" (or "Om, I am a self whose essence is the diamond knowledge of emptiness.")[22] The diamond knowledge is an integral point as the term *vajra* in Vajrayana (another name for Tibetan Buddhism) means "diamond." According to Richard Robinson when Vajrayana takes on the Mādyamika concept of emptiness, it also takes on the philosophy that the world is basically pure.[23] This understanding of emptiness allows for rituals that involve taboos, and the breaking of taboos is accepted only if the participant is pure of mind. Tsong Khapa gives insight into what exactly is meant by pure of mind when he states, "If your intention to benefit living beings in whatever you do is not strong, then you will sever the root of the Mahāyāna."[24] This statement also reasserts the origin of Vajrayana Buddhsim in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Khapa also mentions the *Root Tantra of Mañjuśrī*: "faulty ethical discipline" is a path that does not lead to enlightenment, thereby illuminating the need for purity once again. A tantric follower, rather, would be operating from the premise that "the expert in poison repels poison by that very poison" (cf.

[18] Olson, 227
[19] Olson, 227
[20] Olson, 264
[21] Olson, 249
[22] Robinson, 119
[23] Robinson, 117
[24] Olson, 258

Hevajra.)[25] One key part of that poison is passion as we read in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*: "Do not lust!".[26] This discussion is necessary as the ritual explained in the *Candamahārosana Tantra* is of a sexual nature. The philosophy behind the practices can be seen however in a statement within the *Hevajra-tantra:* "By passion the world is bound, by passion too it is released."[27]

These practices also symbolize the union of "Wisdom" and her male counterpart "Means," the two main attributes required to achieve bliss. The consummation of this union was considered to be the equivalent of the Great Bliss. If emptiness is interdependent as Nagarjuna states, then the Tantric ritual communicates that the God of Skill in Means and Goddess Wisdom are one, representing interdependence and emptiness. Mystical realization is similar to erotic consummation possibly in that the two are interrelated past this relationship just as the Tantric boddhisattva is beyond the dualistic good and evil. In this way the Tibetan version of emptiness is similar to that of the Zen school in that it surpasses duality.

In addition, parts of the *Candamahārosana Tantra* lend themselves to the aversion or purging of lust or worldly pleasure in their description of ingesting a distasteful substance. For instance, "He should drink urine as he likes, placing his mouth on the Bhaga, and/ placing it on the anal lotus he should eat feces as he likes./ There should not be even a slight disgust, otherwise Success would be ruined. This diet is the best, eaten by all Buddhas."[28] In this part of the ritual particularly, the process seems to be that of mortification, a purification and cleansing of lust in order to come to a realization of emptiness. A tantric follower would be operating from the idea that "the expert in poison repels poison by that very poison" as stated in the *Hevajra*. It is important to note that while these rituals were once in practice, the current accepted form of practice requires meditating on the ritual rather than taking part physically in an act.

Two other key practices in the Vajrayana school are use of mantra and mandala. Mantra pertains to sound and its association with the chakras or energy centers of the body.[29] This connection between sound and spirit can be seen in the *Hevajra-tantra* particularly in discussion of the "sound EVAM, the great bliss itself… known from the process of consecration."[30] This is the sound in which "the knowledge of Bliss is consummated" and four "Moments" are prescribed (Variety, Development, Consummation, and Blank) through which EVAM can be attained.[31] This use of sound, particularly the use of mantra, is believed to have Vedic roots. Mantra had many uses, from invoking a deity to, bordering on what was considered magic, warding off demons and goblins.[32] Within the *Hevajra-tantra* an invocation of the Earth-Goddess is given as "Thou Goddess, honoured by Hevajra's wrath,/ Mother of the Earth, and bearer of many kinds of gems,/ Thou art witness here, for I, so and so, would lay out the *mandala.*"

Mandala is another ritualistic practice used in Tibetan Buddhist ceremony. The shape of the *mandala* was derived from the architecture of the stupas under which lay the holy relics of the Buddha. These stupas were thought to represent the cosmos, and thereby the *mandala* took on such meaning as well. The creation of the *mandala* itself became a highly symbolized ritual in which the creator became a deity. In the *Candamahārosana*

[25] Robinson, 121
[26] Olson, 260
[27] Olson, 232
[28] Olson, 240
[29] Robinson, 117
[30] Olson, 233
[31] Olson, 233
[32] Robinson, 119

Tantra, which reveals a ceremony involving the creation of a *mandala* and its associated practices and written only for "one who has devoutly entered the mandala of *Candamahārosana,* explicit directions are given with regard to a ceremony involving several taboos.

Use of meditative rituals involving *mandalas*, chant, and deities might seem to discount the basis in Mādyamika emptiness. Yet in Tibetan Buddhism the condition which is being surpassed is embraced. The Tantric bodhisattva, existing beyond good and evil, can break taboos with a pure mind. Rather they prove Vajrayana to be a more kataphatic worship although the idea of emptiness would suggest an apophatic approach.

Returning to The Zen series *The Ox and His Herdsman*, there are two drawings following the one depicting emptiness which signify that the state of *śūnyatā* is not the final spiritual destination. Of the two final frames, the one directly after emptiness shows a tree next to a stream. This represents consciousness merging with nature. Hence, one becomes empty and then becomes one. Ritualistic consummation in Tibetan Buddhism offers the same opportunity. In this light the recent discovery that Ch'an or Zen played a role in the development of Tibetan Buddhism during the eighth and ninth centuries is unsurprising.[33] The final frame of the series shows the herdsman as an elderly man walking with a boy. This is the final step on the path of the bodhisattva as it is the bodhisattva who makes an effort to bring each creature to its own realization of *śūnyatā*.

Conclusion

Emptiness is a fundamental belief in all schools of the Mahāyāna tradition. A clear depiction is provided by the Zen school with the *Ox and His Herdsman*, a series of drawings wherein the herdsman represents any being and the ox symbolizes the self. In the first seven frames, the herdsman searches, finds and tames the ox leading to an eighth frame of an empty circle representing emptiness. The Tibetan school's understanding of emptiness is opaque in contrast. Yet as one sees in Nagarjuna's argument in *Fundamentals of the Middle Way*, emptiness is a core belief in Mahāyāna Buddhism. The *Fundamentals* provides a philosophical argument that is meant to end all philosophical debate by proving *śūnyatā*. Nagarjuna proves that all things are interdependent using the analogy of fire and fuel. Only that which exists on its own is not *śūnyatā*. To prove his point, Nagarjuna denies his own faith in the Buddha and his Dharma. The Zen Ox images also demonstrate that a realization of emptiness is a major step in the bodhisattva path. This is true for Tibetan Buddhism as well although at first glance the rituals used in the tradition seem to be of another nature entirely. Tibetan Buddhist rituals break taboos, provide specific directions as to attire and employ other means which do not seem to adhere to a philosophy of emptiness. Yet with further study it becomes apparent that with an understanding of the symbolism within Tibetan ritual, the concept of emptiness is present. Buddhism is not a religion that requires belief, it is a tradition that can lead to a realization of *śūnyatā* through philosophical debate such as in the Madyamika school or an understanding of ritual practice in the Tibetan tradition. It is the understanding of emptiness in Tibetan Buddhism that also takes on the philosophy that the world is basically pure. This understanding allows for the breaking of taboos in ritual. The Tantric rituals that are erotic in nature focus on the union of the God Skill in Means and the Goddess Wisdom. This union represents an interdependence that is reminiscent of Nagarjuna's argument. The erotic consummation is likened to the mystical realization wherein Skill in Means and Wisdom are combined past a dichotomy just as the Tantric bodhisattva is beyond good and evil. Yet this realization is only another beginning; in *The Ox and His Herdsman* there are two remaining illustrations of steps on the path.

[33] Goodman, Steven D., *Tibetan Buddhism: reason and revelation,* 57

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The Effects of Religiosity and Traditional Gender Role Conformity on the Use

of Profanity by American Female Students in Southern Arkansas

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Abstract

The frequency of swearing among women has increased even though the use of profanity is regarded as a gender specific phenomenon. The present research studied the effects of religiosity and traditional gender role conformity on swearing among women. A questionnaire was distributed to college students in Southern Arkansas in the Spring of 2007 for the purpose of this study. According to this study, "shit" was the most frequently used swearword and "fuck" was the most offensive swearword. The median of average daily swearing of women was 2 and the mean was 8.327. Further analysis of the data revealed the existence of an indirect relationship between religiosity and the frequency of swearing. However, the relationship between traditional gender role conformity and frequency of swearing wasn't statistically significant. The present study could prove to be very useful as it implies that religiosity could be a factor in reducing swearing among women.

The use of swearwords is a gender specific phenomenon. Most societies accept the use of profanity by men. On the contrary, girls are taught from childhood not to use swearwords. Robin Lakoff (1973) explored the topic of swearing in her book *Language and Woman's Place*. She asserted that women use weaker expletives like "My God" and "My goodness" instead of stronger ones like "damn" because even as children, females are expected to learn to become ladies and ladies never swear. However, Lakoff's book was published in the early 1970s and since then, gender roles and expectations have changed. Now, words like "fuck" and "bitch" have become relatively common in the everyday vocabulary of women. In 1998, singer Meredith Brooks was nominated for the Grammy Award for her song "Bitch" which includes the line, "I am a bitch."

Very few studies have dealt with swearing among women. Susan E. Hughes (1992) conducted a study entitled "Expletives of Lower Working-class Women." The study concluded that lower class women commonly use words like "fuck," "twat," and "bastard" not only as an insult but during general conversation as well. The author further pointed out that the meanings of the words change according to the social context. For instance, "a little bastard" depicts endearment when used during general conversation; however, it takes on negative connotation when the child is reprimanded.

Rassin and Van Der Heijden (2005) conducted a study entitled "Appearing Credible? Swearing Helps!" This study, conducted in the Netherlands, concluded that even though most people think that swearing would lessen the credibility of statements, the study revealed that the credibility of statements containing swearwords was higher than that of swear-free statements. Furthermore, the researchers concluded that during police interrogation, swearing increases the validity of statements made by the arrested person.

Rassin and Muris (2005) conducted a study entitled "Why Do Women Swear? An Exploration of Reasons for and Perceived Efficacy of Swearing in Dutch Female Students." The research focused on the reasons and efficacy for swearing among Dutch female undergraduate students. The respondents reported that they swear frequently. The study found that participants used swear words regularly as an outlet for negative emotions while the need to express positive emotions and shock were the least important reasons to swear. The study also reported that swearing is associated with verbal as well as physical aggression. However, the efficacy of swearing was perceived to be moderate.

Methodology

The sample consisted of 68 American female undergraduates between the ages of 18 and 26 in Southern Arkansas.[1] A convenience sample was chosen and participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire in the cafeteria and Honors Hall. No distinction was made on the basis of race and ethnicity.

In this study, items from four scales have been used for measuring the four variables. A copy of the "Swearword Questionnaire" devised by Rassin and Muris (2005) for their study on swearing was obtained from Dr. Rassin and has been used with his permission. "Measurement of gender-role attitudes, beliefs and principles" by Prarthana Prasad and Jonathan Baron was used to measure traditional gender role conformity. The "Aggression Questionnaire" by A. H. Buss and M. Perry (1992) was used to measure aggression. The "Religiosity Scale" by J. E. Faulkner and G. F. DeJong was used to measure religiosity. All four questionnaires have been reworded to suite the specific needs of the present study.

Swearing, the dependent variable, is the use of taboo words that might be related to religion, race, gender, madness, body parts, body excretions, and body functions as defined by Rassin and Murris (2005) in their article on swearing by women. Swearing encompasses the frequency of swearing, the use of expletives, and the reason(s)/justification(s) for swearing. Traditional Gender Role Conformity, an independent variable, reflects the adherence to general, usually stereotypical views regarding the expected behavior of men and women. Aggression, the control variable, included verbal aggression and anger. Religiosity, another independent variable, as defined in this research project incorporated the Ideological, Intellectual and Ritualistic Dimensions. The Ideological Dimension measured the importance of adhering to core beliefs. The Intellectual Dimension the extent to which a person knew the tenets of his or her faith. Finally, the Ritualistic Dimension measured participation in religious activities (Robinson and Shaver, 1973).

Analysis and Findings

The present research studied the use of profanity in a sample of American female undergraduate students attending a university in Southern Arkansas. Rather than studying why women don't swear, this study focused on the effects of religiosity and traditional gender role conformity in the use of such expletives by women. In this study, the swearword frequencies were recalculated as daily average. For example, if a participant reported swearing 8 times per week, the attribute of the variable was recorded as 1.14 swearwords per day. The median of average of daily swearing was 2 and the mean was 8.327.

In this study, "shit" was the most frequently used swearword amongst the participants (53), closely followed by "damn/damn it" (49), and "fuck" (24). Other frequently used swearwords included "hell" (22), "ass" (19), "bitch" (13), "asshole" (8), "fucker/motherfucker" (6), "bastard" (3), "son of a bitch" (3), "jackass" (2), "hoebag" (1), "shitface" (1), and "cock" (1). Mild expressions such as "shoot" (2), "darn" (1), "dern" (1) and "oh my gosh" were also mentioned. Among the participants, seven answered that they did not swear and one did not leave any response to this question.

Amongst the most offensive swearwords were "fuck" (29 mentions), "god damn/ god damn it" (28), "bitch" (22), "motherfucker" (8), "cunt" (5), "nigger/nigga" (5), "whore" (3), "slut" (3), "shit" (3), "pussy" (3), "bastard" (3), "cock" (2), "dick" (1), "ass" (1), and "hell" (1). The other responses include "anything using the Lord's Name in vain" (4), "all swearwords" (4), "no response" (3), "none" (2), and "I'd rather not" (1).[2]

[1] The initial sample consisted of 90 students. However, 22 students didn't respond to some of the questions.

[2] The questionnaire distributed to the participants listed some reasons for swearing. The reasons are: As a consequence of negative emotions, to express positive emotions, to strengthen one's argument, to shock or insult others, and habit. The respondents were asked to list any other reasons that might

One of the hypotheses in this present study is that an indirect relationship exists between religiosity and average daily swearing. Table I shows a bivariate contingency analysis between these two variables.

Table 1. The Relationship between Religiosity and Average Daily Swearing

Avg. Daily Swearing	Religiosity			
	Low	Medium	High	Total
High	60.00% (12)	41.67% (10)	12.50% (3)	(25)
Medium	30.00% (6)	29.17% (7)	33.33% (8)	(22)
Low	10.00% (2)	29.17% (7)	54.17% (13)	(22)
Total	(20)	(24)	(24)	(68)
Gamma = -0.564		Chi Square = 18.705		

Information from Table 1 supports the hypothesis that an inverse relationship exists between religiosity and average daily swearing. The gamma of -0.564 reveals a moderately strong inverse relationship between the two variables. The chi square value for Table I is 13.716, which is greater than the critical value 9.488. Therefore, the null hypothesis that religiosity and average daily swearing are independent has been rejected. Furthermore, a comparison of the relative distribution of the dependent variable across the categories of religiosity provides additional support of a meaningful indirect relationship between the two variables. For instance, 60% of the participants who scored low on religiosity scored high on average daily swearing. The percentage is higher as compared to 12.50% of the participants who scored high on religiosity as well as average daily swearing.

Table 2. The Relationship between Traditional Gender Role

lead to swearing. The responses are “playing a part in a play,” “greeting friends as in ‘What’s up hoe’ and ‘Bitch what r u doin,’” “peer pressure,” “joking with friends,” “unconsciously,” and “while having sex.”

Conformity and Average Daily Swearing

Avg. Daily Swearing	Traditional Gender Role Conformity			
	Low	Medium	High	Total
High	28.00% (7)	38.89% (7)	36.00% (9)	(23)
Medium	36.00% (9)	33.33% (6)	24.00% (6)	(21)
Low	36.00% (9)	27.78% (5)	40.00% (10)	(24)
Total	(25)	(18)	(25)	(68)
Gamma = -0.209 Chi Square = 1.501				

Another independent variable used in the study is traditional gender role conformity. Contingency analysis of Table 2 reveals the curvilinear nature of the relationship that exists between traditional gender role conformity and swearing. The gamma was calculated to be -0.209, indicating a weak relationship between the two variables. The chi square value of 1.501, isn't statistically significant to establish a relationship between the two variables. So, as compared to religiosity, traditional gender role conformity has minimal effect on the frequency of swearing by women.

Partial I. The Relationship Between Religiosity and Average Daily Swearing Controlling for Aggression

Table 3: The Relationship Between Religiosity and Average Daily Swearing at Low Levels of Aggression

Avg. Daily Swearing	Religiosity			
	Low	Medium	High	Total
High	50.00% (3)	14.29% (1)	0.00% (0)	(4)
Medium	33.33% (2)	42.86% (3)	12.50% (1)	(6)
Low	16.67% (1)	42.86% (3)	87.50% (7)	(11)
Total	(6)	(7)	(8)	(21)
Gamma = -0.802 Chi Square = 9.361				

Table 4: The Relationship Between Religiosity and Average Daily

Swearing at Medium Level of Aggression (need to change from here)

Avg. Daily Swearing	Religiosity			
	Low	Medium	High	Total
High	50.00% (3)	14.29% (1)	0.00% (0)	(4)
Medium	33.33% (2)	42.86% (3)	12.50% (1)	(6)
Low	16.67% (1)	42.86% (3)	87.50% (7)	(11)
Total	(6)	(7)	(8)	(21)
Gamma = -0.802 Chi Square = 9.361				

Table 5: The Relationship Between Religiosity and Average Daily Swearing at High Level of Aggression

Avg. Daily Swearing	Religiosity			
	Low	Medium	High	Total
High	44.44% (4)	75.00% (3)	37.50% (3)	(10)
Medium	44.44% (4)	25.00% (1)	37.50% (3)	(8)
Low	11.11% (1)	0.00% (0)	25.00% (2)	(3)
Total	(9)	(4)	(8)	(21)
Gamma = -0.140				

Aggression is a variable that might be related to the frequency of swearing. From Table 3, it is evident that an inverse relationship exists between religiosity and average daily swearing at low level of aggression. It should be noted that none of the participants who scored low on aggression and high on religiosity, scored high in average daily swearing. The gamma is a strong -0.802. However, the chi square value of 9.362 isn't statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. This may be due to the small sample size used in the study. It is clear from Table 4 that an inverse relationship exists between religiosity and average daily swearing at medium level of aggression. The gamma for the relationship is a high -0.802. The chi square value for the relationship is 10.563, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Table 5 shows a curvilinear relationship between religiosity and average daily swearing by females at high level of aggression. The average daily swearing increases even as the level of religiosity moves from low to medium.

However, as the level of religiosity moves from medium to high, average daily swearing decreases. The curvilinear nature of the relationship is interesting because even at high level of aggression, high level of religiosity resulted in the decrease in the average daily swearing pattern in women. So, when both aggression and religiosity are high, religiosity has more impact on the average daily swearing pattern of women than aggression. However, gamma for this relationship is a weak -0.140. This partial supports the hypothesis that women with low aggression and high religiosity will have low average daily swearing pattern as the gamma for low aggression (-0.802) is higher as compared to the original gamma of 0.564.

Partial II. The Relationship Between Religiosity and Average Daily Swearing Controlling for Race

Table 6: The relationship between religiosity and average daily swearing for Caucasians

Avg. Daily Swearing	Religiosity			
	Low	Medium	High	Total
High	60.00% (6)	46.67% (7)	15.79% (3)	(16)
Medium	20.00% (2)	26.67% (4)	36.84% (7)	(13)
Low	20.00% (2)	26.67% (4)	47.37% (9)	(15)
Total	(10)	(15)	(19)	(44)
Gamma = -0.717				

Table 7: The relationship between religiosity and average daily swearing for African Americans

Avg. Daily Swearing	Religiosity			
	Low	Medium	High	Total
High	50.00% (4)	42.86% (3)	0.00% (0)	(7)
Medium	50.00% (4)	28.57% (2)	33.33% (1)	(7)
Low	0.00% (0)	28.57% (2)	66.67% (2)	(4)
Total	(8)	(7)	(3)	(18)
Gamma = -0.606				

Another variable that is considered to be associated with swearing is race. Therefore, the research used race for multivariate analysis. Partial II is a replication elaboration model with the data for both Caucasians and African Americans supporting the original inverse relationship between religiosity and average daily swearing. This partial shows that regardless of race, the relationship between religiosity and average daily swearing is indirect. The gamma for Caucasians is a strong -0.717 and for African Americans a moderately strong -0.606. It is of interest to note that Caucasian women in general tend to swear more frequently than their African American counterparts.

Summary

In summary, the existence of a direct relationship between religiosity and frequency of swearing supported the research hypothesis. However, the curvilinear relationship between traditional gender role conformity and frequency of swearing did not support the research hypothesis. In future studies, meaningful control variable may be introduced to the relationship so as to decipher the reason for the curvilinear nature of the relationship. Furthermore, religiosity can be measured in terms of extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity so that the relationship between religiosity and average daily swearing can be more meaningful. The present research has limitations due to the number of research participants and the relative lack of heterogeneity of the participants. So, future research should aim at incorporating female participants from diverse backgrounds. The present study implies that religiosity could be a factor in reducing swearing among women. So, a similar study should be done with male participants so that the results of female study and male study can be compared.

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Jesus at Starbucks: The Melding of the Sacred and the Profane in U.S. Evangelical Religious Practices

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It was with the Industrial Revolution, as society plunged ever more eagerly into the conquest of material riches and bent all its energies to the accumulation of goods, that material poverty became a major problem. Obviously, this meant abandonment or downgrading of spiritual values, virtue, etc. To share or not to share in the increase of the collective wealth - this was the number one question… The great business of the whole society and therefore of all its members, was to increase consumption of goods (Jacques Ellul, 1969:36).

Introduction

The role of consumption in shaping human societies is a long-standing concern of sociologists. The growth of consumer capitalism and a corresponding consumer culture American society has been well-documented by scholars in recent decades (Robbins, 2007; Ritzer, 2008). The dominance of consumer capitalism and its attendant consumer culture has led to increasing debate in the mass media and among scholars. Interestingly, however, there appears to be little ongoing debate among evangelicals on the potential impact of consumerism on religious institutions and practices. A cursory examination recent articles in *Christianity Today*, the largest-circulation evangelical periodical, suggests few articles on the topic during the last three or four years. In contrast, the secularization of religion continues to receive attention from evangelical leaders and scholars of religion. Perhaps in response to the limited scholarship on consumerism and modern religion, Kosmin and Keysar, in their book, *Religion in a Free Market*, noted that consumer-based economic activity creates a cultural context where "religion becomes a product that can be marketed by entrepreneurs alert to the needs that religious affiliations can satisfy" (2006:13). In this paper, the unique context of U.S. evangelical churches will serve as a sociological case study to identify possible impacts of consumption on the modern evangelical religious enterprise. Evangelical churches, as a form of moral association, may stand against the incorporation of consumer culture into its midst, or alternatively, fully embrace its major elements. The ideas of both scholars and evangelical thinkers on this topic will be reviewed, and implications for a new and emerging "consuming religion" among evangelicals will be discussed.

Several limitations of this analysis should be noted. There are variations among evangelical churches in terms the degree to which they have embraced elements of consumerism. Also, megachurches, which may be more likely to embrace consumer religion, are not necessarily typical of all churches that subscribe to similar doctrinal beliefs. For example, Saddleback Community Church may not be typical of all Southern Baptist churches. Finally, contemporary evangelical religious groups are diverse in terms of historical development and doctrinal beliefs. In making generalizations about evangelical churches, specific observations and conclusions noted may not apply in all cases.

Conceptual Framework: Networks, McDonaldization, and Starbuckization

Randall Collins is a conflict theorist and the author of *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*. He has developed a holistic version of conflict theory that attempts to identify the major networks in society that produce inevitable conflicts over ideas, resources, and power. According to Collins (2000), modern society is a composite of

competing networks. Informed by Michael Mann's *The Sources of Social Power* (1993), Collins argued that modern societies are comprised of four basic networks: the military, the political, the economic system, and the cultural system. When one or more of these networks gains ascendancy, as the cultural system & the economic system have achieved, these networks tends to dominate the other networks and largely dictate society's direction. The cultural network, represented by education, art, the mass media, and entertainment, is collectively a controlling source of contemporary social power. The current form of consumer-based capitalism also allows the economic system to wield influence in multiple social spheres. While Collins does not use the term "consumer culture," the notion of a cultural form largely shaped by consumerism represents one application and updating of his ideas. Much of Collin's theoretical development is based on his research on intellectuals and the exploration of how new ideas develop and become dominant in social networks. Collins (2000) concluded that many ideas do not influence society simply because they are "true." Rather, they influence the larger society because they can generate supportive networks, which have accumulated economic, social, and symbolic capital, and have access to the reality-defining institutions of society (Collins, 2000).

The influence of consumerism on contemporary evangelical religious practice serves as an exemplar of Collins's conceptual framework. Casual observation, coupled with survey data, indicates that us that young people believe that personal spirituality is important but organized religion is not. In response, evangelical leaders have strived to repackage the delivery of "church" to fit consumer preferences of a target market. By adopting a consumer mindset, evangelical leaders risk ceding the authority of church to the consumer. A consumer-driven church no longer has any "binding address" on the members. Consumer religion, then, is not simply a change in the style of religious activity; it is influenced by new authority structures in ever-expanding concentric circles: cultural authority influenced by consumerist ideology has subsumed religious authority.

The work of Sociologist George Ritzer on McDonaldization also provides a conceptual framework for examining the social forces influencing modern religion. Ritzer defines McDonaldization as "the process by which the principles of McDonald's are affecting more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world" (Ritzer, 2008:1).
The basic principles of McDonaldization are efficiency, simplification of the product and predictability. Ritzer's model is based on the process of rationalization delineated by Max Weber, who used the bureaucracy of a large-scale organization as his prototype. Ritzer argued that McDonaldization represented a contemporary application of the principle of rationalization (Ritzer, 2006). More recently, Ritzer has emphasized the pivotal role of predictability as the prime mover in accelerating McDonaldization in other social realms, such as the Internet, the criminal justice system, museums, sports, education, and religion (Ritzer, 2008).

According to Ritzer (2008), Starbucks has created a variant of McDonaldization by adding a "show" element to its marketing of coffee and related products. While 90 percent of Starbucks customers typically step buy their drinks and leave, 10 percent who are "free performers" in the show who sit in chairs, use their laptops, and perhaps read the *New York Times*. This feature conveys the sense to those in line that they are welcome to stay at Starbucks as long as they want, unlike McDonald's, which encourages customers to leave as soon as possible. This is considered a "show" because logistical realities dictate that not all their customers can sit in the shop and linger, because Starbucks needs most customers to enter and leave the store quickly, or use the drive-through in order to generate maximal revenue. Ritzer suggests that "Starbuckization" is a significant new business model, but at

its core, it represents the McDonaldization of the coffee shop business. Despite this conclusion, Ritzer devotes an entire chapter to "The Starbuckization of Society" in the fifth edition of his noted book, *The McDonaldization of Society* (2008).

The predictability and homogeneity of Starbucks serves as a metaphor for what consumer have come to expect in modern religious settings. Ritzer (2008) quoted the senior megachurch pastor on the creation of satellite campuses, who suggested that they are akin to franchises: "It's kind of like going to Starbucks. You know the product you are going to get" (Salmon and Harris, 2007). Other traditional religious practices and doctrines have been similarly modified. In 1985, for example, the Pope announced that Catholics could receive indulgences via the Pope's annual Christmas benediction, as opposed to receiving them in person. "Cafe Church" was recently founded in Melbourne, Australia, described on its web site as an emerging (non-denominational) church that meets in a cafe (Cafe Church, 2008). Ritzer notes that Starbucks has infantilized coffee to increase its sales to young adults by offering sweetened, highly flavored and creamy drinks – "coffee for those who do not like coffee" (2008:228). One application to contemporary evangelicals can be quickly noted; the typical book titles available in the Christian bookstore perhaps increasingly reflect this feature of Starbucks, with such titles as *Eight Steps to Spiritual Maturity* and *Christian Parent's Toolkit* (Ritzer, 2008).

The Emergence of Consumer Religion

Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, in their book, *The Churching of America, 1776-1990* (2002), argue that modern religious organizations, especially U.S. churches, were principally influenced by consumer capitalism. The leadership of ministers changed from doctrinal teaching and support of local parishioners to functioning as a sales force for their church or denomination; evangelism became primarily a marketing strategy embellished with a few doctrinal pronouncements. The acceptance of an economic model of religious organization is so complete that most church leaders never question its validity or fully recognize the unprecedented nature of this pattern in religious history. They argue that the evidence of this dominant pattern can be noted in all forms of religious organization, e.g., Protestant, Catholic, and even new religions. Since the First Amendment prohibited state-sanctioned religion, American churches were drawn to a consumer-driven model, according to Finke and Stark. Religious affiliation became a matter of choice, and religious organizations are required to compete for participants, and the "invisible hand' of the marketplace is as unforgiving of ineffective religious firms as it is of their commercial counterparts" (Finke and Stark, 2002:17).

It is a commonly cited "sociological given" that economic activity holds the potential to shape the major spheres of social life, including religion. Alternatively, culture and religion may also initiate economic activity, as Max Weber notably articulated. Rodney Stark recently applied Weber's thesis in his controversial book, *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success* (2006). Stark asserted that Europe's successful economic and political development was due largely to its embrace of Christianity, and its emphasis on theological progress as an essential element of religious belief systems. This doctrinal emphasis encouraged medieval scholasticism, and ultimately, "Renaissance Capitalism" by influencing developments based on reason. Geographic regions with sizable Christian populations thus held a tactical advantage in developing commerce (Stark, 2006). Regardless of the causal direction of economic influences on social institutions, Stark's work is exemplary of the widely held sociological notion that economic activity and religious activity are inextricably linked.

The economic transition of modern capitalist societies to a new form, consumer capitalism, has been well documented and debated by economists and sociologists (Trumball, 2006; Ritzer, 2008). The leading role of the United States in the promotion of consumerism in the global marketplace is also commonly recognized, and a source of frequent critiques from a variety of political, moral, and religious perspectives (Beabout and Echeverria, 2002; Ritzer, 2006). The impact of consumer-based economic activity on modern social institutions has received detailed scholarly attention in social sciences, thanks to George Ritzer's pioneering work on McDonaldization (Ritzer, 2000; Ritzer, 2006). Less attention, however, has been given to the unintended consequences consumer capitalism in other areas of social life. On evangelical writer observed that modern consumer-based economic activity leads to a qualitative cultural shift whereby

"Consumption entails most profoundly the cultivation of pleasure, the pursuit of novelty, and the chasing after illusory experiences associated with material goods" (Clapp, 1996:
20). Berger (2005), a noted sociologist of religion, has also highlighted the increasing dominamce of a consumer-based model of contemporary religious practice. In a recent article, "Religion and the West," he observed:

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

In consumer culture, ubiquitous forms of advertising and branding for consumer products are prime movers in shaping modern social institutions. In his book, *Branded Nation: The Marketing of Megachurch, College Inc., and Museumworld*, Twitchell asserted that brands are part of a larger social narrative associated with specific products and lifestyles. The special taste of Evian bottled water, for example, is imputed to the brand, not the water. Instead of having a negative impact on the larger society, Twitchell (2000) argues 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 religion as touchstones of personal identity. Adults, adolescents, and even young children can construct new, fluid self-perceptions and identities exemplified by corporate 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 by the economic elite. The modern construction of self-identity is based on consumption. In many social contexts, especially in youth subcultures, the symbolic value of the product exceeds its practical value. Twitchell (1999; 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 utilitarian value, but also for the crucial security purpose 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, 1999).

Consumer Religion I: Modern Evangelical Religious Practice

Branding has become so successful in American culture, that social spheres traditionally antithetical to branding are now aggressively pursuing it. Especially during the past decade, institutional leaders in religion, higher education, and museums, and the art world have worked identify an innovative "Madison Avenue" strategy or lose market share. Twitchell (1999) pointed out that most ministers would likely insist that branding has nothing to do with their professional duties. He argues, however, that whenever supply exceeds demand, branding follows. In particular, the increasing cultural dominance of megachurches represents a case study in the branding of contemporary religion. From its inception, most megachurches were designed not to compete directly with traditional churches but to bring in the "unchurched" - individuals who might otherwise be playing golf, strolling through the mall, or at the lake on Sunday morning. The "seeker-friendly" approach advocated by proponents of the church growth movement has been popular, especially among evangelicals. Willow Creek Community Church, just south of Chicago, one of the oldest megachurches, is highlighted by Twitchell as the paragon of the branded evangelical church (Twitchell, 1999).

The church growth movement has led to a consumer-driven model of church organization adopted by many evangelical churches, where the senior minister functions as a chief executive officer, and another ministerial staff member often serves as the "minister of marketing." The target market for evangelical churches organized on this model is not necessarily the economic elite of the local community; rather, the "correct demographic" is often young families with growing disposable incomes. The development of contemporary worship services, children's ministries, and church recreational programs to reach out to local communities are often as essential parts of an effective outreach strategy for both new church starts and established evangelical churches (Fitch, 2005). This "spiritual as technique" approach takes advantage of the changing mindset of churchgoers as consumers of religious services. Protestant Theologian David Wells summarizes this emphasis in modern evangelical churches and provides rare commentary on its inherent flaws:

> The evangelical church today ...is replete with tricks, gadgets, gimmicks, and marketing ploys as it shamelessly adapts itself to our emptied-out, blinded, postmodern world. It is supporting a massive commercial enterprise of Christian products ... and is always begging for money to fuel one entrepreneurial scheme after another, but it is not morally resplendent... There is too little about it that bespeaks the holiness of God. And without the vision for and reality of this holiness, the Gospel becomes trivialized, life loses its depth, [and] God becomes transformed into a product to be sold ... (Wells, 1999:180).

Many modern evangelical churches and religious organizations position themselves as "the last great hope" to resist secularization, arguing that they are the only "remnant" capable of maintaining traditional evangelical church doctrines and practices (McGuire, 2002). In contrast, adherents of the church growth movement seem to openly embrace this unique form of secularization, welcomed by church leaders as a formula for short-term and long-term growth. Sociologist Alan Wolfe, in his book, *The Transformation of American Religion: How We Actually Live Our Faith*, suggests that modern church's intoxication with corporate business culture, self-improvement perspectives, and pop culture is part of a larger trend - secularization (Wolfe, 2003). Secularization, as defined by sociologists, is the process by which religion in a society begins to lose influence and the interest in otherworldly or idealistic religious ideas is replaced by greater emphasis on material success and other

pragmatic concerns (McGuire, 2002). According to sociologist Will Herberg, America is "at once the most religious and the most secular of nations" (Herberg, 1983:41). Wolfe puts it another way: "In every aspect of the religious life, American faith has met American culture - and American culture has triumphed," and "the faithful in the United States are remarkably like everyone else" (Wolfe, 2003:3). Wolfe defends his position by citing a significant number of quantitative and qualitative studies on contemporary American religion. What is especially interesting is that it is not only evangelical Protestantism that is undergoing transformation; Catholic, Mormon, Jewish, and Moslem groups are feeling the pressure to modernize in order to appeal to prospective members. In all of these religious communities, there is evidence that an emphasis on the teaching of doctrine is disappearing, replaced by revised codes of personal morality, popular culture elements, and "branded" religious products.

In the church growth movement, branded products and seminars are the order of the day. Two prominent megachurch leaders in the church growth movement, Bill Hybels, Pastor of Willow Creek in suburban Chicago and Rick Warren, Pastor of Saddleback in southern California, have published numerous books and regularly conduct training seminars for church leaders. The purpose of all these products is to provide the information and skills necessary to replicate the Willow Creek or Saddleback model of church growth in any geographic setting. Topics ranging from how to greet visitors on the parking lot, logo development, implementing contemporary worship services, and the latest technology are covered in training seminars targeted to church leaders. Currently, Warren, the most prominent of the two evangelical leaders, founded Saddleback Church in 1980; more than 20,000 people attend its services every weekend. In addition, he launched pastors.com, a website that provides sermons and other resources to more than 140,000 ministers each week. Rick Warren rose to national prominence with the publishing of his bestseller, *The Purpose-Driven Life*. More than 20,000 churches conducted local "purpose-driven" programs based on the book; there also a related website, purposedriven.com. The purpose-driven program for local churches has been popular nationally a variety of denominations, including Lutherans, Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians (Nussbaum, 2006).

Consumer Religion II: Delivering on Brand Promise

James Twitchell, University of Florida Professor of English and Advertising, in his new book, *Shopping for God: How Christianity Went From in Your Heart to in Your Face* (2008) argued for a reciprocal relationship between modern religion and consumerism -American religion has played a role in shaping of American consumerism and consumerism has shaped modern religion. His current book is an update of his earlier book, *Branded Nation* (2000), and exclusively focused on modern religion. The phrase, "shopping for God" was used in the title of the book both literally and metaphorically. Twitchell visited numerous churches and interviewed pastors and local church attendees to discover what churches are currently "selling" and what religious consumers are currently 'buying." Twitchell highlighted the intersections between popular culture and American religion. In earlier decades, celebrities rarely revealed their religious beliefs; in the early 21st Century, celebrities openly discuss both traditional and non-traditional religious beliefs. Prominent examples include Mel Gibson's Catholicism, George W. Bush and Hillary Clinton's Methodism Tom Cruise's Scientology, and Richard Gere's Buddhism. Religion also has been resurgent in the mass media. Most Americans are familiar with religious-themed epics such as *The Ten Commandments* and *Ben Hur*. During the 1990s, *Touched by an Angel* was one of the most popular shows on television. Television news programs frequently air special features on some aspect of religion. In 2004, Americans spent $3.7 billion on Christian books and

related merchandise (Twitchell, 2007).

Through the application of a traditional advertising framework, Twitchell (2000) characterized the current American religious market as a type of "scramble market" in which the supply of a relatively homogenous product exceeds demand (for that product). In response to these market forces, the suppliers need to find innovative ways to repackage their products, distinguish themselves from their competitors, and increase their appeal to prospective buyers. Twitchell argued that the traditional mainline denominations by and large have failing at these adjustments, and as a result, have lost members (market share). This failure is further exacerbated by the fact that these mainstream denominations lack male members, a circumstance that Twitchell analyzed in some depth. In contrast to these denominations, there are two sets of Protestant groups that have set themselves apart from others and increasing in membership. Mormons and Seventh-day Adventist churches are growing with traditional methods - by door-to-door visits and one-on-one interaction. Churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention appear to be experiencing a radical decentralization whereby individual congregations could tailor themselves to fit niche markets in their communities. Interestingly, some mainline denominations have not given up market share without a response; several denominations are waging multimillion-dollar national advertising campaigns in an effort to change their brands and appeal to new converts and "brand switchers." According to Twitchell, the real growth arena, and main competitors to the aforementioned groups were new non-denominational rivals in the form of megachurches, the evangelical equivalent of the big-box store.

Twitchell noted that at least part of megachurch success lies in the fact that they have changed the way the many people experience a weekly church service. Worship in a megachurch is often closer to a rock concert than a traditional church worship service. Megachurch services often feature upbeat music, videos on large screens, audience participation and short practical messages (preaching) with typical themes on empowerment rather than guilt. Common elements of megachurches include community (small groups), casual attire, a "campus" with satellite locations, recreational facilities, web sites and podcasts. The latter two features deliver the ultimate in "designer religions" that allow individuals to control the content of their religion, as well as the timing and manner of its delivery. Twitchell argued that it was not by accident that most megachurches are very male-oriented. Rather, they have intentionally "branded" themselves to appeal to men, based on the presupposition that wives and children will follow (Twitchell, 2007).

Conclusions and Implications

According to Ritzer's McDonaldization thesis, the achievement of the optimum means to achieve a given end is increasing applied to modern religion (Drane, 2006; Ritzer, 2008). This McDonaldization process, with a few enhancements from Starbuckization, has qualitatively changed the traditional focus in many evangelical churches - from the attraction of new converts and the continuing spiritual development of "the faithful" to an emphasis on consumer religion. In the context of modern consumerism, "one-size-fits-all formulas" have a sort of "fatal" attraction. Many evangelical churches have incorporated the main features of McDonaldization, efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. In addition, they have added the component of staging - the "Starbucks effect" (Ritzer, 2008). The emphasis on entertainment and the "triumph of the therapeutic" preceded the modern megachurch movement, but clearly megachurches have put these themes into practice at unprecedented levels (Twitchell, 2007).

The packaging of religious messages to the level of "consumables" for the masses presents

a number of perils and pitfalls to modern religious practice. Protestant theologian Richard Niebuhr (1935) applied his sociological imagination to the problems faced by churches in Western societies in the 1930's, observing that "the crisis of the church from this point of view is not the crisis of the church in the world, but of the world in the church… And this very peril indicates that the church has adjusted itself too much rather than too little to the world in which it lives. It has identified itself too intimately with capitalism, with the philosophy of individualism, and with the imperialism of the West… (Niebuhr, 1935:4). Despite Niebuhr's classic commentary, there is little contemporary analysis and dialogue surrounding these issues among evangelical leaders and scholars, with the exception of a few Catholic scholars such as Richard Neuhaus, Editor of the journal, *First Things*, and Georgetown University Theology Professor Vincent Miller (2003). The future of consumer religion is uncertain. Conceptually, consumer religion involves a "hybrid" of both economic and religious activity that influences contemporary beliefs, practices, and religious organization. The discussion in this paper has centered on evangelicals. The emergence of consumer religion is also evident among diverse religious groups - Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Buddhist and Muslim. In the case of consumer religion among evangelicals, will this "domestic captivity of religious belief" lead to countermovements (Miller, 2003:228)? Is it possible to see a return to earlier historical patterns where evangelicalism emphasized the "informing of culture" and collective responses to pressing social needs, instead of promulgating a new evangelical organizational structure? Though not a social scientist, the observations of Advertising scholar Robert Twitchell may provide some additional insight on the future of consumer religion:

> This is a spiritual world in flux, not wholly driven by the whimsical caprices of the materialists or the unfettered vision of the holy, but always somewhere in between. Spectators on both sides continually scramble to bring new stories to market. As long as the yearning for sensation can be whetted by these stories, and as long as there is a plenitude of suppliers, this market will stay roiled. The only certainty is that the mass-mediated and mass-marketed world of the increasingly powerful Industrial Revolution is drawing us ever closer together. How religion allows us to make either meaning or mincemeat out of this shrinking world remains to be seen (Twitchell, 2007:291).

Biographical Note

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Religious Fraud: Preying for Profit

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Introduction

To the opponents of religion, all religions are fraudulent, deceitful, and deceptive. In their view, religious leaders deceive and manipulate their followers to control and exploit them financially and otherwise. Such a view is typically unthinkable to the faithful who are convinced that their religion is true and their leaders are righteous. These two different social constructions of reality are largely irreconcilable. What cannot be disputed, however, is that religion; especially American versions of Christianity are vulnerable to financial fraud within its ranks. The question is why? In this paper, several possible explanations will be explored. First, we will clarify our definition of "fraud." Second, several recent cases will be examined to demonstrate the prevalence of illegal financial activities within American Christian churches and organizations. Third, we will examine five systemic factors operating with the belief systems of many American Christian organizations that may account for the high incidence of fraudulent activity.

Fraud and Other Deceptions

Fraud is best defined as dishonesty (UCR, FBI, 2004). Essentially, it involves a lie, half-truth, or some form of deception (CFR, Labor Dept., 1963). Frauds can be intricate, elaborate, and inscrutable such as a corporate price fixing scheme. They can be exceedingly basic and simple, such as selling a "lemon" to an unwary customer. All fraudulent behavior is unfortunately not illegal. There are many unethical manipulations that are not technically prohibited by law. The marketing industry would cease to exist if all misrepresentations were unlawful. Truth in advertising is an ongoing struggle for consumer action groups. Our focus, however, will be on prosecutable offenses within a religious context, specifically American Christianity.

Examples of Religious Fraud

One government official was quoted as saying that "more money is stolen in the name of God than any other way" (Cunningham, 2002). Precise statistical evidence supporting such a statement may not be readily available; however, examples of religious fraud cases are easy to find. One of the most memorable recent cases is the 1989 PTL scandal in which Jim Bakker was convicted of 24 counts of defrauding investors out of 158 million dollars (Rosin, 1999). But such highly publicized cases may be just the tip of a much larger problem. According to security regulators, from 1999 through 2001, religious con artists in 27 states scammed at least 90,000 investors out of almost 2 billion dollars. Over the previous five year period, 13,000 investors lost 450 million (Zoll, 2006). In other words, the incidence of religious fraud appears to be increasing.

In August of 2007, Pastor Gerald Payne, founder of the Tampa-based Greater Ministries International Church, was sentenced to 27 years in prison for defrauding over 20,000 investors out of 580 million dollars. Payne and his partners promised investors that they would double their money through "divinely inspired investments" (Tampa Tribune, 2001) A year earlier, two executives for the Baptist Foundation of Arizona were convicted of fraud and racketeering after more than 11,000 investors lost over $550 million. Essentially,

the principals "cooked the books" to hide extensive losses (Tucson Citizen, 2006).

Currently there is a scandal brewing at Oral Roberts University, where a claim of misappropriation of university funds has been leveled against University President Richard Roberts and his family. While no formal charges have been filed, Board members Creflo Dollar and Benny Hinn have resigned (Fox News, 2007). Their names have also come to the forefront in a Senatorial investigation initiated by Senator Charles Grassley into the finances of several high profile T.V. evangelists including Joyce Meyers, Paula White, Eddie Long, and Kenneth Copeland as well as Hinn and Dollar (Gorski, 2008). Apparently, Dollar has refused to release financial records to the Senatorial committee. At this time, it appears that the principals will at some point appear before the committee and give testimony. The U.S Government is clearly sending a message to the religious community that the tax laws governing religious organizations are subject to review. The financial abuses occurring within religious organizations both unethical and illegal represent a longstanding problem that cannot be ignored. But why are religious settings so vulnerable to various forms of manipulation and fraud?

Affinity Crime

By their very nature, religious organizations are thought to be characterized by honesty. While this reputation may be changing, American Christianity in particular is supposed to be about redeeming mankind from their sinful nature. Through faith in Christ, there is to be renewed commitment to holy living and good works. Dishonesty is strictly forbidden by any and all Christian ethical systems. Furthermore, in Christian communities there is a commonly held notion that you can trust fellow believers. In fact, some communities list "Christian" businesses in one form or another, so that fellow Christians can "feel at peace" when enlisting their services. Many professionals as well as merchants proudly display some form of Christian symbol on their advertisements to inspire confidence. Therefore, members of churches and other religious organizations have a "natural" tendency to trust others who share their faith. This fact has led some to call religious fraud an "affinity crime" (BC Securities Commission, 2008).

The Prosperity Gospel

The so-called Prosperity Gospel while not embraced by all American Christians is nonetheless popular in many Christian circles. Several notable TV evangelists are associated with this version of Christianity including Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, John Avanzini, Creflo Dollar, and, T.D. Jakes. According to reports, this teaching is racing through Africa where mega churches with the names of Victory Bible Church, Jesus Breakthrough Assembly, Triumphant Christian Centre, and Winners Chapel are popping up like mushrooms. Their roots are in a thoroughly contextualized and Americanized form of Christianity which teaches that financial propensity is the birthright of Christians. The faithful are told that if they can imagine it, they can have it. There is enormous emphasis on entrepreneurship. Often, congregants will be asked to turn to their neighbor and ask, "have you started your own business yet?" Affluence becomes a sign of God's blessing (Gifford, 2007).

According to the teaching of prosperity gospel preachers, one sure way of speeding up the arrival of God's blessing is to "plant a seed" of faith, usually by giving to the church or ministry. The "Man of God" is seen as having "prophetic" powers to facilitate the flow of blessing. Since these celebrity pastors have a kingly status and unquestioned authority, the possibilities for exploitation and manipulation are infinite. Furthermore, since followers are desperately looking for opportunities to increase their finances, they are particularly drawn to

"get rich quick" investment schemes. In an emotionally charged climate where motivational rhetoric is common, the temptation to make the "leap of faith" is particularly strong.

But what happens when nothing happens, or disaster happens. Churches of this elk live in a kind of tension between success and failure (Gifford, 2007). When members don't get their blessing, they are told that "waiting builds character," or "your time will come, be patient," or "it is always darkest before the dawn," or some other rationalization. Movement between these types of churches is brisk as followers chase their dream. Nevertheless, the prosperity gospel churches are growing at a rapid rate around the world, and, as they do, the possibilities of religious fraud grow exponentially.

The Gospel of Self-fulfillment

The current emphasis on self-fulfillment and personal success in modern Christian circles, in many ways, produces the same effects as the prosperity gospel.
Joel Osteen is the pastor of the largest congregation in the United States, Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas. Osteen is perhaps a hybrid between a prosperity preacher and a motivational speaker in the tradition of Robert Schuller. A growing number of evangelical congregations while not fully embracing the prosperity gospel have adopted a "smiley face" message which virtually never mentions sin, judgment, repentance, self-denial, sacrifice, or hell, but focuses on an upbeat, optimistic, and positive message of personal success and self-fulfillment. In American culture it is a short walk from success and meeting felt needs to financial prosperity. The implication is obvious, if you are successful and self-fulfilled, you are affluent.

While it is difficult to imagine a congregation of Christians facing imminent martyrdom reading and understanding Osteen's book, "Your Best Life Now," consumer oriented church goers easily connect with its simple message (Osteen, 2004). God wants you to live the American dream. Since you will need to make a "boatload" of money to make that happen, you need the favor of God in your life. *Voila*, we have come full circle back to prosperity as the sign of God's blessing. Since success is confirmation of God's favor, the quest for affluence once again assures that some members are candidates to become the victims of shrewd and unethical manipulations. Conversations with members and former members of such churches confirm that "investment opportunities" of all types are constantly circulating among the faithful.

Imitation of American Pop Culture

Jesus is indisputably the founder of the Christian religion. His disciples also known as the Apostles recorded four accounts of Jesus' life, and later wrote letters to the Jesus' followers setting forth patterns and parameters for their life together. In the Gospel of John 17:16, Jesus is quoted as saying, "they (Jesus' followers) are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (*Holy Bible,* New American Standard). Jesus also said that "if the world hate you, you know that it hated Me before it hate you...if you were of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (Jn 15:18,19, *Holy Bible,* New American Standard) The Apostle John later writes, "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.....if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (I Jn. 2:15-17, *Holy Bible,* New American Standard). The Apostle Paul admonishes Jesus' followers to "not be conformed to this world," (Rom 12:2, *Holy Bible,* New American Standard), and the Apostle James declares that "do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God" (Jas. 4:4, *Holy Bible,* New American Version). These ancient teachings clearly portrays an other worldly almost ascetic religion. The encouragement to live separate and holy lives is clear.

Riches were seen to be a snare or distraction. Jesus said that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to get into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:24, *Holy Bible,* New American Standard). Jesus declares that anyone who follows him must "deny themselves and take up their cross." (Luke 9:23, *Holy Bible,* New American Standard). Jesus was apparently a homeless iterant preacher who at the time he lived had neither fame nor fortune. He experienced a time of popularity, but his "hard teachings" ultimately drove away the crowds. Before, Jesus' execution, even his closest followers abandoned him.

Two thousand years later, the American version of Christianity, especially among modern evangelicals, has little connection with the teachings of Jesus or the early primitive church. Calls for self-denial have been replaced with the pursuit of self-fulfillment. Modesty has been replaced with extravagance, frugality with affluence, and holiness with unqualified contextualization. The popular culture is fully embraced and aggressively imitated. This change has caught the attention of noted religious historian, Martin Marty who for thirty-five years has been a professor of religious history at the University of Chicago. Dr. Marty has written over fifty books and is a well known speaker and teacher. Marty says that modern evangelicalism has clearly shifted from otherworldliness to this worldliness (Marty, 2000).

According to Marty, in the middle of the 20th century, culturally beleaguered evangelicals often made the claim that it was clear they represented the truth because they were "little and despised." Marty points out that these same groups now claim numbers and prosperity as the test of truth (Marty, 2000). Gone are the calls to sacrifice (except in giving to building programs and fund-raisers). Now, numbers and money are the signs of God's blessing. No longer "poor and rejected" modern evangelicals embrace the popular culture with its emphasis on celebrity status, material possessions, glamour, sensuality, and personal happiness.

Marty states that clearly American evangelicals once disapproved of the popular culture, but now embrace and imitate it. He points out that no group was more vehemently opposed to the sensual and sexually provocative nature of early rock music than evangelicals. They aggressively held this view for several decades through the 20th century, but evangelicals now imitate every conceivable form of rock music because it draws potential customers (Marty, 2000). The contemporary Christian music business is now a billion dollar a year industry. For several decades preachers spoke against the vulgarity and sensuality of rock music, however, once they discovered rock music as a marketing strategy able to swell their congregations, rock music has been miraculously sanctified. The question is, should we have believed them then, or should be believe them now?

Marty states that the "market" has become the new "god" of modern evangelical Christianity. He points out that their endless marketing and the race for prosperity and success is actually the road to their failure. He claims they are losing their distinctiveness, their identity, and perhaps, even their Faith. Marty views consumerism as a threat to the culture, and he believes that modern evangelicalism has become part of the problem instead of a voice for reform (Marty, 2000).

Another religious scholar agrees with Marty's observations. Alan Wolfe is the director of the Center for Religion at Boston College. Dr. Wolfe has noted a similar "paradigm shift" occurring in evangelical churches and other forms of American religion. In his book, *The Transformation of American Religion: How we Actually Live Our Faith,* he observes that American Christians, especially evangelicals are embracing and imitating an ever increasingly vulgar and vacuous popular culture (Wolfe, 2003). He finds such a tactic to be inconsistent with historical Christian teachings and traditions. He sees American Christianity moving to a kind of pragmatic materialism.

The extreme contextualism of modern American evangelical churches and their pursuit of popular culture are making them evermore vulnerable to various forms of religious

scams and frauds. In popular culture only the powerful and affluent have significance. The royal road to status is "stuff," and increasing ones bottom-line is the ticket to having both. In popular American culture, risk takers are glamorized not for acts of self-sacrifice and humility, but for their achievements of recognition, status, and wealth. This belief system is fertile ground for planting "get rich quick" schemes of every conceivable kind.

The Corporate Business Model and the American Church

Both the Seeker Sensitive Paradigm associated with Bill Hybels of Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago and the Purpose Driven Paradigm of Rick Warren and Saddleback Community Church in Southern California are based on the idea of applying a corporate business model to planting churches and increasing the numbers of existing congregations. Both Hybels and Warren have been especially aggressive and successful at promoting this strategy. Warren claims to have trained over 400,000 pastors around the world in his system (Sataline, 2006). Hybels created the Willow Creek Association, a consulting firm that "earned $17 million last year, partly by selling marketing and management advice to 10,500 member churches from 90 denominations." The association is run by a Harvard MBA who readily admits to an "entrepreneurial impulse" (Symonds, 2005).

Seeker Sensitive and Purpose Driven churches are clearly consumer driven. All things "traditional" are avoided such as pews, stained glass, historical symbols, public prayer, public Bible reading, robes, hymns, literary, and just about any thing else that is remotely connected to "religion." Instead of a separation between the sacred and the profane or secular, the two are merged. Proponents of these church growth paradigms intend to create a seamless transition between the mall, the theater, the workplace, and their churches. This impulse is reflected in architecture where churches are made to look like corporate headquarters and are called "worship centers" instead of "sanctuaries." The entrepreneurial motif is evident throughout as food courts, boutiques, bookstores, and other corporate style amenities abound.

Obviously, all of these new paradigm churches are not identical, but they are remarkably stereotypical. The visitor will encounter many similarities such as the trained greeters, the reception desk, ubiquitous video monitors, elaborate sound systems, theatrical stages and lighting, the hospitality coffee bar, a mind-numbing array of program options, and the ever-present air of commercialism. Sermons will be brief, often humorous, and are typically focused on self-help issues such as dealing with stress, overcoming barriers to success, and achieving ones dreams. Sermon titles will be borrowed from popular T.V. programs, sports, or corporate themes such as "Desperate Houselives," "Winning Life's Big Game," or "What Can Big Brown Do for You?"

Another similarity is the prevalence of corporate terminology such as "target demographic," "niche-market," "vision statements," and "capital projects." It is not surprising to find business language in a business culture. While traditional symbols are typically removed, they are replaced with corporate style logos and slogans which find their way onto hats, t-shirts, and other paraphernalia sold to members. In this entrepreneurial climate, "investment" strategies and "financial growth" opportunities appear normal and natural, and the vulnerability of the faithful to financial exploitation is high. It is not surprising that one of the biggest religious fraud cases in recent times occurred at Rick Warren's Saddleback Church. According to the Securities and Exchange Commission reports, Lambert Vander Tuig, a member of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, ran a real estate scam that bilked investors out of $50 million. Many of the victims were members of Saddleback. Apparently Vander Tuig's salesmen presented themselves as faithful Christians and distributed free copies of Warren's book, "The Purpose Driven Life," to perspective

customers. (Dallas Morning News, 2006)

Conclusions

The conclusion of this author is that the beliefs and values of some modern forms of Christianity make them particularly vulnerable to financial fraud. The most susceptible are those that are strongly materialistic. When fame and fortune are the focus of one's religion, then investment and growth schemes of all kinds are particularly attractive. Interestingly, the historic teachings of Jesus and his disciples appear to support a completely different emphasis. The entrepreneurial impulse of many modern Christian churches is more of a reflection of contemporary American culture than the values and beliefs of the primitive Christian church.

In John 10:11, Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep, but he that is a hireling.....sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees: and the wolf catches them, and scatters the sheep...the hireling flees, because he is a hireling, and cares not for sheep" (*Holy Bible,* New American Standard). The clear implication is that the one who pastors the sheep for a fee is concerned with his own interests. Under his leadership, the sheep are vulnerable. The true shepherd actually loves the sheep and protects them. Six hundred years earlier, the Hebrew Prophet Ezekiel lodged a similar complaint against the religious leaders of his day, "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" (Ezek. 34:2, *Holy Bible,* New American Standard).

Biographical Note

Walt Scalen teaches Criminal Justice in the Department of Government at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. His career in the criminal justice system spanned twenty years. He served as a United States Probation Officer for the U.S. District Courts in the Southern District of Texas (Investigations Unit), and was the Chief Probation Officer for the State District Courts of Angelina County, Texas. Dr. Scalen has also taught Sociology and Psychology classes at both Angelina College and Stephen F. Austin State University. He has been writing in the fields of Religion and the Sociology of Religion for the last four years.

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Evil in the Afterglow: Quantum Thought in Baudrillard

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> *Complex as is this entanglement of good and evil, so too is it difficult to pass beyond good and evil when the very distinction between the two has disappeared.*[1] –Jean Baudrillard, in The Intelligence of Evil, or the Lucidity Pact (2005)

Anyone who reads a sampling of Jean Baudrillard's works begins to notice a particular fixation with what he terms *simulation*. Simulation, according to Baudrillard, is defined as "the replacement of the world with a kind of substitute universe, a counter-world of signs"—a kind of parallel universe. With the ascent and eventual dominance of technology and forms of media in both Western culture and economy, Baudrillard submits the possibility that industrial society (a society based on the production of goods) has been replaced by "a code-governed phase" where simulation is the dominant schema.[2] It is still a society governed by production, but not of goods. The production of production, in the theatrical sense, the simulation, the rhetoric, the passing and presentation of information, both in media and new venues like the internet, are what governs and drives the reality of the new society. Baudrillard also frequently refers to *Hyperreality* (a level of existent reality beyond that which is experienced along with its opposite) even to the point of addressing the presence of *artificial intelligence* helping to create the realities of Western societies. But what is *reality*? Baudrillard suggests that no state of presentation can be termed reality. Reality is the essence of everything produced and presented as well as its counterreality and ultimately, its Hyperreality. Reality is life and death, beauty and hideousness, positive and negative, male and female, war and peace, night and day, even good and evil. Everything and its opposite is reality and all manifestations of presentations must exist as reality for the other to also exist. Just as Durkheim even stated that one of the functions of deviance is to separate right from wrong—(in essence, how can "good" be defined and recognized without the presence of evil?), Borges once proclaimed, "We accept the real so readily only because we sense that reality does not exist."[3] Thus, reality must also have an opposing presence—perhaps the fictitious, perhaps the absurd.

In Baudrillard's work The Transparency of Evil (2003) he addresses the problem of evil in the world. Whereas every attempt to create a unified theory based on utopian principles or an actual utopian world has failed, it has done so based on the existence of evil. Perfect worlds (read, good) cannot exist with the concurrent existence of evil (an undesirable or imperfect state), which is necessary to define and contrast that which is good or ideal. As a result, the mere existence of evil negates any possibility of an ideal world (or, utopia). Baudrillard calls this problem "the deterrence…of every principle." Since anything that exists in reality has an alter-ego, an opposite, or a negation also existing in reality, our society and culture, based on the notion of infinite progress and betterment, has witnessed the movement toward *Hyperreality*—the world of beyond, or after (quite similar to

[1] Baudrillard, Jean. The Intelligence of Evil, or The Lucidity Pact. New York: Berg, 2005. p. 155.
[2] Turner, Chris. "The Intelligence of Evil: An Introduction." In Jean Baudrillard, The Intelligence of Evil or The Lucidity Pact. New York: Berg, 2005. pp. 3-4.
[3] Qtd. in Jean Baudrillard, The Intelligence of Evil, or The Lucidity Pact. New York: Berg, 2005. p. vii.

Nietzsche's notion of a world "beyond good and evil"[4])—in which, as an attempt to salvage notions of advancement toward the ultimate perfection, a complete simulation of condition and belief is created. (i.e. Since utopia cannot exist in reality and evil can be negated only by Hyperreality, the notion of Utopia can exist only in a state of perception and presentation—if all believe the world to be perfect, it is—and the same exists concerning evil). As Baudrillard writes:

> Things have no origin any longer or no end, they cannot develop logically or dialectically anymore, but only chaotically and randomly. They are becoming '"extreme" in the literal sense…A radical implosion has taken place…now dominated by a grandiose programme of total production which itself supplants the world, *realizes* it in the sense of turning it wholly into known rationally structured reality, seeks to produce a *total* simulation, a virtual reality…[5]

In his first chapter of The Transparency of Evil (2003) entitled, "After the Orgy", Baudrillard sexualizes the birth of modernity by stating that Western culture participated in an "orgy" "where modernity exploded upon us, the moment of liberation in every sphere." This deliberate sexual imagery to describe the new realities embracing the millennial world draws attention once again to perfection and pleasure without the presence of evil, at least for the moment. No one can argue that a pleasurable sexual encounter has any comparison to the rest of the day and represents, in fact, a respite from the ordinary state of being where equal proportions of good, bad, and indifferent comprise reality. Sexual ecstasy is tantamount to a state of Hyperreality where pain, evil, and all the troubles of the world are eliminated, at least for the moment. His point seems to be that evil can cease to exist in Hyperreality—in the state of total simulation—in a world that has become willing to adopt certain beliefs and perceptions that no longer represent logic and reality but emotion and virtual-reality (which may well be termed "anti-reality" or "fantasy"). Still, to the storybook writer, fantastic worlds without struggle where only good things occur do exist, but their settings are also a virtual reality created as fiction. Baudrillard believes that the modern world is being deconstructed by its citizens and reassembled in a way that negates the presence of evil—still, evil exists. This analogy is reminiscent of the pre-industrial world where some devout individuals (Cioran calls them *saints* in his Tears and Saints[6]) were known to experience religious ecstasy, almost always achieved by personal acts such as chastity, self-denial, and even self-flagellation. After the Protestant Reformation and subsequent industrial revolution (see Weber's "Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism"[7]) self-denial was still practiced (asceticism) but for religious and economic purposes, not necessarily to deny evil a foothold in the specter of human events (Calvin's *predestination* fully acknowledges the presence and persistence of evil in the world). It is with the recognition of Baudrillard's "orgy"—"liberation in every sphere"—that the transformation from a religious being to a technological simulation begins—where religious and economic ecstasy become personalized toward sexual ecstasy—where self-denial evolves into self-indulgence—and where a universe filled with evil can be transformed into one without evil, if only in the perceptions of those who shape reality into Hyperreality and proclaim the relativism of evil in a world filled with its traditional form.

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[4] Nietzsche, Friedrich. Beyond Good and Evil. [1886]. New York: Penguin, 1973.
[5] Baudrillard, The Intelligence of Evil, op. cit. p. 8-9.
[6] Cioran, Emile. Tears and Saints. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
[7] Weber, Max. The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism. [1906]. New York: Scribner, 1959.

In pre-industrial times, the concept of God was that of the Divine Creator, a spiritual being who granted free will to individuals to choose between righteousness and sin (or good and evil). God and Satan were the figureheads of each of these ideal types, but all was controlled by the omnipotent God, who should be loved, worshipped, and feared all at the same time. This idea sparked early philosophical inquiries such as, "If God is good and in control of all things, why did he bring or allow evil into the world?" Baudrillard comments on this question. He states that, "God himself is complicit in all this. God himself is in league with the principle of evil."[8] As he states in The Intelligence of Evil, or the Lucidity Pact (2005):

> …God…needed [an advocate]. He who created the world and, as a result, took upon himself an infinite debt, and he who has been constantly passing that debt on to mankind, the entire history of which since then is one of wrongdoing.
>
> And worse: to that enforced guilt he added humiliation.
>
> For mankind is faced with the impossibility of making a sacrifice to equal this gift of God's, the impossibility of making restitution and wiping away the debt. Being unable to take up this challenge, it has to humble itself and give thanks. It is at this point that God chose to cancel the debt himself by sending his beloved son to sacrifice himself on the cross. He pretends to humble himself, and, in doing so, inflicts an even greater humiliation upon humanity by making it conscious of its impotence. Henceforth humanity is condemned to give thanks, not just for having been created, but for having been saved…
>
> This is the greatest act of manipulation ever…
>
> And it succeeded…even beyond the death of God…
>
> We mimic [still today]…this humiliation received from God: in victimhood, humanitarianism, self-derision, and self-deprecation, in this immense sacrificial effort that stands in, in our case, for redemption.
>
> We could have take advantage of the death of God to be free of debt. But we didn't take that option. We chose to deepen the debt, to eternalize it…
>
> 'God's absence' has not come to our aid…[9]

In the Industrial Age, often dominated by the principles of Social Darwinism, the final wedge was driven between the traditional religious order and the new innovative world of evolutionary progress and individual success. Evil, no doubt, still persisted.

Post-industrialism and modernity ushered in an era of scientific advancement, communications, technology, and forms and depths of intelligence never before witnessed, all developing at an exponential pace—even technology with the power to destroy. This is "evil's revenge" according to Baudrillard—"destruction as the only way out from beauty and the excess of beauty."

> "But not just beauty—evil can also befall intelligence. Intelligence protects us from nothing—not even from stupidity…[and] given the hellish production of collective [and artificial] intelligence, we shall have to reckon in the future with an ever-higher rate of artificial stupidity."[10]

[8] Baudrillard, The Intelligence of Evil, op. cit. p. 157.
[9] Ibid. p. 156-57.
[10] Ibid. p. 176-77.

> Still, "[o]ur entire system, both technical and mental, tends toward oneness, identity, and totality…But duality is indefectible…Everything which defects against duality, which is the fundamental rule…leads to disintegration through the violent resurgence of duality…or in conformity with the principle of evil…[11]

Baudrillard readily admits that excess is everywhere in modernity--and excess, without question, causes disintegration. As he states, "every mass produces a critical mass effect."

Some of his statements seem to be validated:

> Nothing escapes the law of a sudden, violent deflation through excess…
>
> The surfeit of politics drives us out of politics.
>
> The surfeit of reality drives us out of reality…
>
> A single mad cow and the whole herd has to be slaughtered…
>
> …[W]here tolerance is held up everywhere as the supreme value, the question of intolerance to the system itself is never raised…
>
> Tolerance, this peaceful coexistence of all cultures…following its own humanitarian logic…assumes…entirely intolerant forms of intervention.
>
> In a world ruthlessly doomed to this principle, the interruption of tolerance will soon be the only event—[an] automatic return of all forms of racism, integrism, and exclusion [is destined] in reaction to this unconditional conviviality.
>
> Whereby evil ironically resurfaces.[12]

Baudrillard concludes that life has become a sort of parallel universe.[13] Because of the existence of apparent cycles of history or events (parallel events) the entire conception of linear progressive history is suspect.[14] As a result, according to Baudrillard, "the possible itself is no longer possible."[15]

While he argues that a return to a mythic vision of things (a "golden age") is a dangerous pursuit, a principle "of historical and mental evolution" is just as dangerous. While he does not advocate a mere acceptance of the world, he warns against the failure to recognize the current simulations of reality that almost everyone produces. By introducing the notion of quantum physics, including the concepts of wave-particle duality, the notion of a singularity, entanglement, and Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, he suggests that empirical studies of the "real world" be rejected and in their place a recognition that no matter what science may conclude about society, the opposite may well be the case (or soon will be).[16] Hypocrisy is omnipresent—perhaps the only constant in the universe—justifying the law of duality.

Everything in society is accelerating in an exponential fashion (and actually always has—just like the expansion of the universe) from global debt, to flows of capital, to the generation of information and the growth of the Internet, to destructive weaponry. Each of

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[11] Ibid. p. 185.
[12] Ibid. p. 196.
[13] Ibid. p. 197.
[14] Ibid. p. 203.
[15] Ibid. p.. 204.
[16] Cole, Steven. "Book Review: Solidifying Fragments." International Journal of Baudrillard Studies. Vol. 3, No. 1 (January 2006). <http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol3_1/cole.htm>.

these venues operate like parallel universes unto themselves, and each "are like time bombs."[17]

> Reason would probably insist that we [also] include these worlds into our homogenous universe: nuclear weapons would have peaceful use, all the debts would be erased, all flows of capital would be reinvested in terms of social well-being, and information would contribute to knowledge. This is no doubt a dangerous utopia. Let these worlds remain parallel to ours…We are the ones who created them and placed them beyond our reach…And it is perhaps better this way. Our society was once solidified by a utopia of progress. It now exists because of a catastrophic imaginary.[18]

So both utopia (which Baudrillard defines as "an imaginary future") as well as uchronia (a historical thought of a missed historical opportunity toward utopia expressed as "what might have happened if…") are at an end as well as history itself. "The possible is no longer possible. What happens, happens, and that's all there is to it."[19] Any semblance of utopia today presents itself only as the "escape of a virtual apocalypse." It is the "last of our utopias" as "we sink ourselves into a simulation that has now become shameful and hopeless" as the ushering in of "the new world order" is occurring before our eyes. Mankind is "in an impossible situation" regarding everything. There is no hope of a return to the past, no clear vision of what the future may hold, and "the distinctive sentiment" emerging within the public in no longer "a paradisaic state of affairs" but instead, melancholy—another parallel state—from a hopeful and idealistic future to despair without direction—the bi-polar and even schizophrenic reality of society—"the vertigo of its final resolution."[20] Still, every final resolution will evolve into a new beginning—that may be better, worse, or simply relative to the past—all being simulations, interpretations, or perceptions of what is termed reality—the word with no definitive state or meaning.

Baudrillard employs analogies and terms from quantum physics to demonstrate that the principles of quantum mechanics hold across the microcosms of the universe as well as to show that uncertainty and randomness of action and outcome along with the principle of duality are the only seeming constants and true laws of existence.

With recent discoveries and theories such as "M-theory" in physics, the universe that human civilization occupies may well have indeed been created by the collision of two parallel universes and society is a micro-level of that creation. Regardless of how significant or insignificant an element of the universe may be, the law of duality still holds throughout, and eventually, that which will rise to oppose or counter human existence will emerge, whether caused by God, the sun, a black hole, an asteroid, or humankind itself. Destruction will invariably happen…and the universe will continue with or without the human form, in a perfect state of randomness. Utopia today is the avoidance of the inevitable—but even when (not "if") it eventually occurs, Baudrillard (as well as Cioran before him) would have to conclude that it was still for the best as then, the melancholy, despair, and the unpleasant trials and challenges of life on earth are finally over for one more species. The principle of duality yet again holds. The nature of the universe is simple.

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[17] Baudrillard, Jean. "Global Debt and Parallel Universe." Trans. Francois Debrix. <http://www.uta.edu/english/apt/collab/texts/globaldebt.html>.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Baudrillard, The Intelligence of Evil, op. cit. p. 204-05.

[20] Baudrillard, Jean. "Hystericizing the Millennium." Trans. Charles Dudas. <http://www.uta.edu/english/apt/collab/texts/hystericizing.html>.

Biographical Note

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The Hospital Room as Uncanny: Psychoanalytic Observations and Recommendations for Pastors and Chaplains

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Introduction

On January 22, 2007, *The Birmingham Post* reported that robotic nurses are on the way. Soon they'll be cleaning up spills, guiding patients to their beds, and handing out medication, to name a few of their tasks (cf. Tamlyn, 2007). This is surely a major technological achievement with many cultural meanings, but one cannot escape the feeling that such an achievement also reflects the growing gap between health professionals and patients. It is also striking that, at the same time that we are witnessing the emergence of robotic nurses, we also find hospitals trying to become more homelike. What is going on here?

At a recent conference at the University of Texas Medical Branch on faculty health, one presenter handed out a picture of a painting made by a medical student. The painting was from the patient's perspective. Half of the patient's vision was of a room very much like a home. It was warm and colorful. The other half of the room, in contrast, was of a standard hospital room, and it was cold and bleak. The caption from the artist read: "If we take the time to know our patients and let them know us, we may mitigate the stark contrast between home and hospital and bolster the confidence and trust from our patients." While I support the spirit of the student's efforts—clearly an attempt to improve the care of patients, and clearly an attempt to humanize the hospital—something about this was strange to me.

As I reflected more on my feelings, I became increasingly disturbed with the picture and with the idea of homelike hospital rooms. I began to feel that there was something *inhospitable* about these hospital rooms. In this paper, I reflect on how some patients may experience homelike hospital rooms, and I argue that these kinds of rooms may elicit uncanny emotions in some patients for several reasons: 1) Homelike hospital rooms fit Freud's definition of the uncanny in that they are familiar, strange, and terrifying; 2) The home itself is often an ambivalent place rather than a place free from anxiety; and 3) The impetus and design of homelike hospital rooms seem to be driven more by market forces than by patient care, thereby contributing to many patient's feelings of alienation rather than making them feel more connected.

But I offer more than critique. I also suggest that pastors and chaplains should encourage the patient and the patient's family to bring transitional and transformational objects into the patient's room, things like favorite sweaters, pictures, cherished Bibles, dressers, medals, and trophies. Individuals, such as pastors and chaplains, also often function as transitional objects, thus making hospital visitation extremely important. Families, of course, intuitively know all of this, as they are often doing such practices already. Winnicott and Bollas have already made their way into medical and pastoral literature (see, e.g., Bedford, 1968; Lee, 1968; Peterson, 1968; Davis, 1990; Miller, 1991; Frazier, 1993 & 2000; Black, 1994; Dykstra, 2001; Hamman, 2001 & 2007; Cooper-White, 2002; MacRitchie, 2001; LaMothe, 2001, 2003 & 2006; & Beier, 2007). [I have cited some of the relevant uses of Winnicott and Bollas in the pastoral literature, because this is my area of expertise. Another recent article has reviewed the medical literature with regards to transitional objects (see Loboprabhu, Molinari, and Lomax, 2007).] I believe, however, that insights from these publications and from what people are doing intuitively regarding hospital stays should become more regular. And the way to ensure such regularity, I will suggest in conclusion, is by means of hospital policy, if only in the handbooks of chaplains.

The context of homelike hospital rooms: A brief history

In America, the practice of medicine has progressed a great deal during the last century, especially in terms of scientific knowledge, industrialization, technological capabilities, and ethical awareness. Indeed, as Kenneth Ludmerer (1999) has noted, "It is hardly an accident that the twentieth century has been called 'the healthy century'" (p. xix). From penicillin to the pace maker, from the CAT scan to ultrasounds, the twentieth century has been a century of incredible medical progress, and it has been rightly deemed the healthy century, at least for those who have had access to these achievements.

As a result of this progress, there have been changes in the practice of medicine, and these changes, of course, have affected patient care. As David Rothman (1991) has eloquently demonstrated, in previous centuries, doctors had relationships with their patients; doctors would make house calls; and doctors would often care for whole families. But as the practice of medicine became industrialized and as technology improved, modern hospitals were built and patients then had to leave their homes to see the doctor. The doctor, after all, couldn't take the x-ray machine to the patient's house. And now that all of the patients were in one place—the hospital—the doctor could see hundreds of patients in a single day, something unimaginable in previous centuries. But such progress came with a cost. Doctors, Rothman argues, became strangers, and they were no longer a part of the family.

In terms of ethical awareness, one major change in how doctors have related to patients involves the issue of paternalism, where, as the term implies, doctors treat their patients as if they were children and, therefore, not giving due regard to the patient's own thoughts and feelings (cf. Katz, 2002). For decades, patients were objects to be taken care of and studied, not subjects in their own right with autonomy. And the authority of doctors went basically unchallenged. But through a number of scandals in which many patients were used and abused—perhaps the most infamous case being the Tuskegee scandal, where physicians in Macon county, Alabama observed the natural course of syphilis in African Americans from the mid-1930s to the early 1970s, despite the fact that it had been established in 1945 that penicillin would cure these patients (cf. Rothman, 1991, p. 183)—and also through a change in American culture and consciousness in the 1960s, the Belmont Report and the Patient's Bill of Rights were established to protect patients. Today, at least in theory and on paper, patients must be respected as persons, treated beneficently, and justly—no longer, in other words, may they be treated paternalistically (cf. Katz, 2002).

In the late 1960s, a time when established authority did not fare well, the field of the medical humanities emerged as a response to the abuses of medical authority and from a growing awareness that technical knowledge alone is not sufficient in guiding medical research and practice (Carson, 2008). Paul's Ramsey's (1970) *The Patient as Person* is the exemplary text here. And since the creation of the medical humanities—a field dedicated to humanizing the practice of medicine—the medical community seems to have recognized, more or less, that "something human" has been lost when the practice of medicine became industrialized, bureaucratic, and technocratic (and the medical humanities have taken it as part of its mission to identify and to address this "something human" that has been lost).

One response to the impersonal forces and dehumanizing tendencies of modern medicine has been "patient-centered care" (Gerteis, 1993 & Stewart, 2003; cf. May & Mead, 1999). And one example of an application of patient-centered care is the relatively recent efforts of trying to make the hospital room more like a home. By making the hospital less industrial, and by making it warmer and brighter, the hope is that the patients would enjoy their stays a bit more. In "Healing by Design," Horsburgh (1995) notes that hospitals in the U.S. grew steadily from 1945 to 1974 and that, from 1974 to 1993, hospitals actually reduced in number. He noted that, unlike in previous years, hospital buildings today focus on more than simply function and utility—architectural aesthetics are taken into account now

because of the wide spread view that the space in which healing occurs matters to the healing process itself. Entrances, Horsburgh argues, need to be clearly visible, landmarks within hospitals must be utilized, an appropriate amount of contact with people must be facilitated, and patients must have access to nature in some fashion. All of these shifts in design are unquestionably good and are genuinely helpful. And there have been studies on the effects of such efforts (see, e.g., Douglass & Douglass, 2004). But what seems to be the crucial issue, one study found, has "more to do with what the place is like to be in, how it feels, rather than what it looks like *per se*" (Douglass & Douglass, 2004, p. 65). As one patient put it: "[T]he most important thing is be able to get a cup of tea when you feel like it—like at home" (p. 65). But, as every psychoanalyst knows, home is likely an ambivalent place for most people. So now I want to turn to the thought of Freud to question the notion of homelike hospital rooms.

The hospital room as uncanny

In "The Uncanny," Freud (1919/2001) defines the uncanny as something terrifying that is both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time (p. 220). He writes,

> At this point I will put forward two considerations which, I think, contain the gist of this short study. In the first place, if psychoanalytic theory is correct in maintaining that every affect belonging to an emotional impulse, whatever its kind, is transformed, if it is repressed, into anxiety, then among instances of frightening things there must be one class in which the frightening element can be shown to be something repressed which *recurs*. This class of frightening things would then constitute the uncanny. (p. 241)

Freud continues,

> In the second place, if this is indeed the secret nature of the uncanny, we can understand why linguistic usage has extended *das Heimliche* ['homely'] into its opposite, *das Unheimliche*; for this uncanny in reality is nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression. (p. 241)

One example that Freud gives to illustrate his point is the severed hand. While there is nothing terrifying about a normal hand, this same hand, when severed from the body, becomes uncanny and terrifying when it is lying on the kitchen floor in a pool of blood and moving. But since not all severed hands elicit an uncanny experience—such as, as Freud notes, the severed hand in Herodotus's story of the treasure of Rhampsinitus—the question arises as to what, in particular, elicits the uncanny. Freud eventually concludes that "an uncanny experience occurs when infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once more to be confirmed" (p. 249).

Freud also notes that observing epileptic and mentally ill patients often has an uncanny effect, because, as Freud writes, "The layman sees in them the working of forces hitherto unsuspected in his fellow-men, but at the same time he is dimly aware of them in remote corners of his own being" (p. 243). I believe, in this sense, hospitals are inherently uncanny places, places where we can imagine ourselves at any moment. And the homelike hospital room, while made to look familiar and safe, is still always potentially a place of terror, a place of deaths past and deaths to come, and a place where one's own body parts could easily be severed, and so the homelike hospital room has certain affinities to the uncanny severed hand: both are familiar, strange, and terrifying. Another way that homelike hospital rooms might also elicit uncanny experiences is that both the home and the hospital are individually places of terror for a great number of people. And this blending of the two spaces, rather than providing the patient with comfort, could very well be frightening—*doubly* frightening—instead.

The homelike hospital room: The case of birthing suites

I now want to turn to what I believe was an experience of the uncanny for one person. This is the person's firsthand account:

> As the gothic apparatus descended, my first thought was to flee the scene. I looked around at the other expectant parents for confirmation of a sudden almost overwhelming fear. They seemed to me impressed, cheerful, absolutely at home with it all. I was edging towards the door when the nurse announced the next stop on the tour: "Next we'll have a look at where you'll be taken if, God forbid, something should go wrong," she said, knocking on what I can now swear was the imitation cherry. "Let's go look where you'll go if you have a caesarian." She ushered us down a narrow hallway whose plum wallpaper gave way suddenly to greenish tile. "The rooms on that side look like normal hospital rooms, nothing special about them," the nurse explained. "Do you have any questions or comments except 'please God, don't let it be me?'" (Michie, 1997, p. 59)

Helena Michie, currently chair of the English department at Rice University, asked herself:

> Was I the only one praying for the green tile and the "normal operating room"? Was I the only one who never wanted to snuggle down in that nightmare of a trick bed or to give birth in a room where everything folded out, up, or down in the process of turning into something else? (p. 59)

Michie offers her own critique of birthing suites, a critique that is not especially relevant for this paper. But an article by Maria Fannin (2003), an article that builds on Michie's article, is relevant here. Fannin notes that "home away from home" is "the catchphrase of modern hospital birth-center promotional literature" (p. 513). And one only has to do a quick search on the Internet with the keyword "homelike hospital" to see just how many hospitals are advertising themselves in this manner, birth-center or no. Fannin is suspicious of this move, a move that supposedly no longer considers the birth process and simply being a woman pathological. And she is suspicious for two reasons: 1) These birthing rooms come at a time when hospitals are trying to sell themselves; and 2) These rooms look an awful lot like what a white, middle-class, heterosexual family would want. In other words, it is as though the message that is being inculcated in consumers is, "*Middle-class* birth is natural." What might an African American couple, or a Latino couple, feel like in these rooms? Or how would a family on welfare experience such homelike hospital rooms? In any case, we do know how Michie, an upper middle-class white woman, felt: afraid. And this was due to the fact that she experienced the room as a replication of a site of male control of women. There could be any number of reasons why a person might experience a homelike hospital room as uncanny. And, following Freud's definition, these reasons will always be idiosyncratic, as "an uncanny experience occurs when infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived by some impression (Freud, 1917/2001, p. 249). But since patients often experience regression in hospitals, and because homelike environments are likely to recall childhood experiences, I believe that homelike hospital rooms may elicit uncanny experiences for a substantial number of patients. A friend of mine suggested to me that, if hospitals want to create a more homely environment for their patients, perhaps they would be better off modeling their rooms after motel rooms rather than homes. This, it seems to me, is a good middle way.

Two suggestions

The transitional object and times of distress

But if the homelike hospital room is problematic on a number of grounds (e.g., psychological, class, race, and gender)—what to do in the meantime? I believe that patients ought to be encouraged by pastors and chaplains to bring objects from their past—pictures,

music, pieces of furniture, say—whenever possible. The difference here from the objects of homelike hospital rooms is that, in these objects, psychoanalytically speaking, there should be nothing artificial; these objects should be transitional and transformational objects, to borrow terms from D. W. Winnicott and Christopher Bollas.

Paul Pruyser, the man responsible for systematically bringing the insights of D. W. Winnicott to bear on religious studies, once said that it took a man like Winnicott to recognize what "the mother and the rest of the family seem to realize instinctively," namely, "that the baby's special object," his teddy bear, say, "stands in a very precious, intimate, and intense relation to him" (Pruyser, 1974, p. 111). In other words, Winnicott identified and named something that we all intuitively knew, and this "something" is what he called transitional objects and transitional phenomena.

What are transitional objects and transitional phenomena? In his "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena," Winnicott (2001) defined and oriented these terms in the literature of psychoanalysis. Since Freud, psychoanalysts have realized the importance of objects such as the breast and the infant's own hand—psychoanalysts have identified this as the oral phase—and psychoanalysts have also noted that children, a little bit later developmentally, next tend to preoccupy themselves with their genitals, which, of course, Freud called the genital phase. Winnicott is interested in what happens between the oral and the genital phases. While the baby is sucking his thumb, at some point he will take in another object—part of a sheet, blanket, or napkin—and the baby begins mouthing and sucking these objects for pleasure. And, Winnicott writes, "One may suppose that thinking, or fantasying, gets linked up with these functional experiences" (p. 214). This process and these objects are what Winnicott refers to as transitional phenomena. He defines transitional objects as those objects that emerge out of this process as "vitally important," usually for the purposes of defense, to help the infant fall asleep. The object is held tight and close when traveling, when lonely, when depressed, when frightened. As time goes on,

> Its fate is to be gradually allowed to be decathected, so that in the course of years it becomes not so much forgotten as relegated to limbo. By this I mean that in health the transitional object does not "go inside" nor does the feeling about it necessarily undergo repression. It is not forgotten and it is not mourned. It loses meaning, and this is because the transitional phenomena have become diffused, have become spread out over the whole intermediate territory between "inner psychic reality" and "the external world as perceived by two persons in common," that is to say, over the whole cultural field. (p. 215)

What is at stake here, one should note, is a view of human nature and how human beings experience reality. In Winnicott's view, human beings experience 1) an inner psychic reality, 2) a shared external reality, and 3) an intermediate area—the world of illusion.

The importance of the transitional object is not that it stands for the breast, although this is the case [as Winnicott remarks on this point: "To some extent these objects stand for the breast, but it is not especially this point that is under discussion" (p. 213)]. But the key point to note for our purposes is that "[a] need for a specific object or a behavior pattern that started at a very early date may reappear at a later age when deprivation threatens" (p. 214). So the objects that pastors and chaplains should encourage patients to bring with them would be objects that have already been used as objects of comfort in previous times of distress. As children cling to special blankets and teddy bears when they are scared, adults use objects of their own—such as rosaries, the King James Bible, and grandfather's gold watch—and adults who are in distress would do well to cling to these objects, especially because, as patients, they are likely experiencing regression.

The transformational object and the recovery period

I believe that other objects, transformational objects, should be used in the recovery period.

What are transformational objects? Transformational objects contain memories and parts of ourselves, like the baseball from the little league championship game, like the song that was playing when we made love for the first time, and like the tie that we wore on the first day of work. These objects, I believe, can be of great comfort and would likely yield important psychological resources for recovery, self-transformation, and hope.

In *The Shadow of the Object*, Christopher Bollas (1987) has a chapter titled "The Transformational Object," a concept that he developed following Winnicott. Bollas notes that, in "his work on the mother-child relation, Winnicott stresses what we might call its stillness: the mother provides a continuity of being, she 'holds' the infant in an environment of her making that facilitates his growth" (p. 13). Bollas does not deny any of this, but he gives it a different emphasis: "I would add that the mother is *less significant and identifiable as an object than as a process* that is identified with cumulative internal and external transformations" (p. 14, my emphasis). So a "transformational object is experimentally identified by the infant with processes that alter self experience" (p. 14). In adult life, transformational objects are not sought for purposes of defense, but they are sought after for the purposes of growth. Bollas also argues that the transformational period precedes the transitional phase. So, just as Winnicott clarified Freud's theory of development by looking at overlooked areas of development, Bollas believes he clarified Winnicott's theory.

Bollas believes that "we have failed to take notice of the phenomenon in adult life of the wide-ranging collective search for an object that is identified with the metamorphosis of the self. In many religious faiths, for example, when the subject believes in the deity's actual potential to transform the total environment, he sustains the terms of the earliest object tie within a mythic structure" (pp. 15-16). Bollas also points out that adults continue to maintain such connections by means of searching for transformation by means of new jobs, vacations, new relationships, or a move to a new house. A key point here is that the adult does not seek to *posses* the object. Rather, she seeks to *experience* the object, because she is certain that such an experience will transform her. When an extremist clings to his revolutionary ideology, when a gambler is compelled to play the perfect hand, when the criminal is driven to pull off the perfect crime, when the mystic is attempting perfect union with the divine, they are, in Bollas's view, looking for a transformational experience, an experience that is preverbal and prerational, an experience that they had with mother. And after the new government is established, after the hand has been won, after the crown jewels stolen, and after union with God experienced, one may be transformed, one may grow, one may be fulfilled—but only temporarily, because the new government will fail, there will be a bigger pot next time, there will be a harder crime to get away with, and the mystic will realize that there is always more to the divine. Even so, the transformational object will have accomplished its work, because transformation, as Bollas puts it, "does not mean gratification" (p. 29), and "[t]ransfomational-object-seeking is an endless memorial search for something in the future that resides in the past" (p. 40).

What, one may ask, is the difference between transitional and transformational objects? This difference can be viewed developmentally, for, as noted, the transformational object precedes the transitional object. James Jones (1991) has commented on the distinction between transitional and transformational objects, and he notes that, unlike the transitional object, "the transformational object is never simply put aside. . . . [and] it is not outgrown" (p. 120). He continues, "for Winnicott the transitional *object* is put aside but the transitional *capacity* to experience in an imaginative and fruitful way continues to mature and develop" (p. 120). As Jones sees it, Winnicott's transitional object—and Kohut's notion of cultural selfobjects as well—seem to arise out of defensive needs, anxieties, object hunger, developmental arrests, and lack—in a word, deficiencies. In contrast, "for Bollas, since the search for a transformational object is rooted not in deficiency but in the positive experience of the caretaking dyad, it represents neither an emptiness nor a lack of self-structure but

rather the natural desire to recover and reexperience something positive and growth enhancing" (p. 121). Perhaps at the end of the day there are more similarities than differences among selfobjects, transitional objects, and transformational objects, and maybe there is more ambiguity than clarity in these definitions. In any case, for the sake of our discussion I think it is useful to make the distinction between transitional objects and transformational objects along the lines of their functions of defense and growth, even if this is not entirely true to Winnicott. In other words, because transitional objects are often used for the purposes of defense as Winnicott himself notes, I believe that such objects should be available to patients in times of especial distress. And since transformational objects are not used for the purposes of defense, but for growth, patients should be encouraged to use them during the recovery period.

However, to make matters more complicated, it seems entirely likely that the same object could, depending on the circumstance, serve a transitional or a transformational function, as when, for example, a teddy bear might serve a defensive function for a child before a surgery, but, after the successful surgery, the object would likely be cherished because it stores the memory of success, recovery, and growth. I would also note that, to an outside observer, there may be very little or no difference in the appearance of the homelike hospital room and a room with transitional and transformational objects, but this is precisely the point. It is not the appearance or the design of the room that is of the most critical importance. What is of critical importance is the patient's own idiosyncratic needs and how they experience the design of the room, and it is attention to these idiosyncrasies to which pastors and chaplains should be attentive.

Let me give an example from the world of poetry of how a single object might serve both transitional and transformational functions. In light of the fact that this paper is intended for pastors and chaplains, here I turn to poetry because I believe, as psychologist of religion Donald Capps (1993) once wrote, "poetry speaks to the same life issues that pastors are concerned with and that poetry's manner of addressing these issues can be instructive for pastors" (p. 4). The "modern poem," Capps writes, "seems to be the most direct descendent of the parable" (p. 2). And poetry, like ministry, is often episodic, open-ended, and deals with common human experiences—like death, love, and going to the hospital.

In a poem titled "Memento Mori," which is Latin for "Remember you are mortal," Collins (1999) writes a poem about a lamp. He begins this poem by stating that he has no need for a skull on his desk or a saint's relic around his neck, as he says that it is enough for him to realize that all of the objects in his room —the carpet, the radio, and the bookstand— will outlive him. And he notes that while none of these objects will attend his funeral, there are worse things he could think about. And so he envisions his lamp attending his funeral, making its way to the small gathering at the cemetery. A worse thing that he could be thinking about, of course, is the fact that his own death is coming. But instead of being somber about this fact—by, for example, keeping a skull on his desk—he is humorous instead. I have three psychoanalytic observations to make here. One: Freud (1927/2001) argues that humor can serve a defensive function, and one can observe humor functioning this way for Collins. And so instead of agonizing about death or having worse thoughts, he is playful and humorous—he writes a poem about his lamp attending his funeral. Two: One could also invoke Winnicott's notion of a transitional object here, since the lamp can also be read as serving a soothing and comforting function for Collins. And three: The lamp could also be understood in a transformational way, as it is likely that Collins has many memories stored in that lamp, perhaps as it gave him light to write poetry in the middle of the night.

Clinical support for the use of transitional and transformational objects

The transitional object in dementia: The case of Mr. A

In "The Transitional Object in Dementia: Clinical Implications," Sheila Loboprabhu, Victor

Molinari, and James Lomax (2007) note that, while there have been a great deal of studies of the transitional object in children, there have been only a few empirical studies of the transitional object among adults. What these authors are out to do, then, is to contribute to this growing literature on the psychology of adults and to illustrate how the concept of the transitional object can be of use in treating and caring for adults with dementia. The authors note that Winnicott did intend his theory to be used for adults, but they also realize that it takes some creative thinking to apply this concept to cases of dementia, because, in dementia, there is a gradual loss of self. In other words, children use transitional objects to gain independence from their mothers, but "independence" is precisely the problem in dementia—that is, the adult suffering from dementia is in danger from losing attachment to all reality, even attachment to oneself. And so Loboprabhu, Molinari, and Lomax redefine the concepts of transitional object and transitional phenomena in subtle ways—the specifics, though fascinating, need not concern us here—to provide a model where transitional objects for the adult suffering from dementia can help serve as a protection against depression and anxiety, as well as provide a sense of continuity, thereby helping the adult stay attached to reality. Such objects may be the physician herself, a favorite song, or spirituality (p. 163). Loboprabhu, Molinari, and Lomax also note that the family members "instinctively move familiar and cherished objects belonging to the patient into the nursing home environment to help the patient cope with grief and loss" (p. 164).

Loboprabhu, Molinari, and Lomax provide case studies to illustrate their argument. One case is the case of Mr. A, a seventy-year-old white male and retired lawyer diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. His physician asked him to stop driving. Mr. A said that he'd take this suggestion "under advisement." Later the physician found out that Mr. A was still driving, so he informed him that he had to call the Department of Public Safety. Mr. A said, "Then I'll just have to sue you." The physician said that he had a legal form in front of him that said that he was protected from such liabilities in these matters. But Mr. A, the retired lawyer, responded: "Oh, don't you know, that was repealed two years ago!" The physician, now unsettled, hesitated until Mr. A shouted: "Gotcha!" After this conversation, in which Mr. A was able to interact with his physician humorously and playfully, Mr. A quit driving. Loboprabhu, Molinari, and Lomax note that the physician viewed the therapy as a "holding environment" where the physician was a transitional object that Mr. A held onto "as he started to walk down the slippery slope of dementia" (p. 153). Through the use of humor, Mr. A was able to play, roughly and affectionately, with the physician because he could withstand the play. Loboprabhu, Molinari, and Lomax note that

> This helped him form an altered, albeit less secure, sense of self. It also enabled him to attain the safety and re-integration needed to proceed successfully with treatment. Unlike the childhood setting, where attenuated attachment to the transitional object is followed by independence on the part of the child, the goal with cognitively impaired older adults is different. Here, the goal is to cope with trauma and grief, to attain the best level of functioning, and to develop a treatment alliance for a patient with a progressively degenerative neurological illness. This vignette therefore illustrates the successful formation of a useful therapeutic relationship in which the physician serves as a soothing transitional object. (p. 154)

There are a few of upshots here for our purposes: 1) I believe that the chaplain or pastor may serve as a transitional object for adults in these hospitals, helping to soothe patients in times of trauma (for a theological reflection on hospital chaplaincy, see Dykstra, 2005b); 2) This article calls attention to the fact that families often intuitively bring cherished objects into hospitals and nursing homes and, I believe, provides psychological support for chaplains to encourage families in this regard; and 3) Because this article also is calling for more psychological research in the use of transitional objects for adults, it implies that there also should be more pastoral and theological reflection on the use of transitional objects with

adults (this literature is growing: see especially Dykstra, 2001 & Hamman, 2007; cf. Carlin, 2007).

A clinical example of the transformational object

In "Transition, Transformation, and the Art of Losing," Dominic McLoughlin (2000) reported his experiences from his weekly "creative writing group for patients at a day centre attached to a hospice in south London," which he ran from 1990 to 1997 (p. 215). In this article, McLoughlin wants to explain why such workshops are therapeutic. They are so, McLoughlin believes, because such workshops and the institution of the hospice itself often function as a transitional space for patients as patients literally find themselves in an "in-between" space, a space between life and death.

McLoughlin uses Winnicott and his notions of the transitional object and transitional space. And McLoughlin believes that communication and understanding always occur "in-between," and that poetry is especially valuable for two individuals to come to a shared language, as poetry seems to naturally cultivate the experience of the "in-between." As McLoughlin puts it: "The aim of the workshop leader could be said to be to create an environment where poetry is, for the participant, a place to concentrate not on himself but not on something else either" (p. 222). Here the participants test the boundaries, gain a sense of trust, play, and (re)discover and (re)create the capacity to believe. McLoughlin also cites a number of other psychoanalytic thinkers in passing, but what we are concerned with here is his use of Bollas. He writes,

> In Christopher Bollas' account of the transformational object, he shows how the mother's earliest attention to the infant amounts to more than the sum of its parts. The mother's cooing, handling, nappy-changing and so on not only functions to soothe, feed and clean the infant but actually transforms his world by encouraging the development of abilities such as grasping, crawling, standing and so on. These transformational effects take place before the infant is aware of the mother as an object to whom he is relating. The object casts its shadow in the sense that, later in life, we want again to be in the presence of the transformational object—the landscape, the promise of a new job, the aesthetic moment—not only for the change we believe it will bring, but for the experience of being transformed. (pp. 225-226)

He continues:

> The transformational object allows us to make an instant pact between the here and now and the infinite and eternal. It teaches us what we already knew but had forgotten. Presenting poetry in a hospice as a transformative experience of this kind allows the patient to choose which poem will or will not mean something to him/her. The patient is not put in the position of having to gain knowledge about a new subject at this late stage in life. He is asked to do something he has done all his life: namely, to learn by experience. (p. 227)

My purpose in citing these two articles is to give the reader a sense of some of the contemporary clinical uses of Winnicott and Bollas so as to provide a context for my endorsement of these theoretical insights when thinking about patient care in light of the homelike hospital room. And I include them I just like these articles, one because I like reading the work of Jim Lomax, and the other because I like poetry and believe in its potential for caring and healing (cf. Capps, 1993). But I also want to suggest here that, while there is a growing literature on transitional and transformational objects in clinical settings, this discussion should also influence how we think about the hospital room itself.

Conclusion

When I worked as a chaplain at Trenton Psychiatric Hospital in New Jersey, I was struck by how sterile it felt. And I was somewhat disturbed by the fact that I had to carry around ten or

fifteen keys to be able to get everywhere I needed to go in the hospital. I was also anxious that there was a video camera in every room and hallway.

My experience was different when I volunteered as a chaplain at Ailsa Psychiatric Hospital in Scotland. Here I was surprised by the fact that one key opened just about every door in the hospital. There were no cameras, and the wards were very homey. Upon entrance, for example, patients often offered to make tea for me. And something seemed right about Ailsa Hosptial. Perhaps because psychiatric hospitals in the United Kingdom do not have to compete for their patients is why the homelike wards of Ailsa Hospital seemed truly humane. These wards, in other words, were not the product of market forces.

But when I considered the idea of the homelike hospital room in hospitals in the United States, something disturbed me. Perhaps such efforts seemed to me to be disingenuous, as they often seem to reflect and to reinforce white middle-class aesthetics and values. Perhaps, too, these rooms simply stir up something from my own personal history. In any case, *something* disturbed me. I have offered Helena Michie's experience as a contemporary example of how the homelike hospital room can unnerve patients. Though perhaps she would not use the word "uncanny" to describe her experience, the fact that Michie experienced sudden fear at the sight of a room that was meant to convey the familiar in an unfamiliar place certainly resonates with *das Unheimliche* and *das Heimliche* in Freud's "Uncanny."

I also find support for questioning the concept of homelike hospital rooms in another poem by Billy Collins (2005). This poem, titled "House," is about a man who is having trouble sleeping. His house was built in 1862, he was told. But because he cannot sleep, he is up looking at old pictures of his house. He looks at a picture of the strong farmer who built the house. The man then looks at the farmer's wife, as well as the farmer's son. And he imagines that the farmer would mount and pleasure his thin wife in the very room that he was in at the moment, lying awake, and realizing that he had nothing to farm, no son to call home, and no wife. All this man had for company was this dead farmer and his dead wife in the photograph and in his imagination. And so we are left with an image of a man who is not at home even in his own house. His house is familiar and strange—uncanny, we might say. But in any event, such a poem might give us pause over the assumption that something that is homelike is likely to reduce our anxiety.

My observations may have implications for hospital policy. I looked at the University of Texas Medical Branch's webpage on policies and procedures, which has an online search engine. I ran the key words "transitional object," and, of course, there were no hits. I also ran the key words "personal belongings." Here the policies addressed what staff members should do when handling the personal belongings of patients, such as money and jewelry. When I ran the key word "chaplain," I found out that patients have the right to wear the clothing of their choice. So I didn't find much policy in this regard. I then talked with an administrator and psychoanalyst at the Texas Medical Center about policy and transitional objects, and he said to me, "Many healthcare facilities allow therapeutic visits by animals and have related policies. I am not sure what other 'policy' there might be to cover use of transitional objects. Nursing homes allow patients to have dolls, but I doubt they have or need a 'policy' for this to happen." In any case, policy or no, I think there needs to be more regular and systematic attention to what families, nurses, doctors, pastors, and chaplains are already doing, and if this falls outside of how hospital administrators normally think of policy, certainly my recommendations could be included in the handbooks of chaplains as a small paragraph.

Curing and caring

I want to close by going back to Winnicott. In a talk titled "Cure," which was addressed to a group of doctors and nurses gathered in a church, Winnicott (1986) reflected on the fact that

the word "cure" today means something like "remedy," but that this was not always the case, as curing used to mean caring as well. This division, according to Winnicott, happened around the year 1700, and the gap has continued to widen ever since. At one end of the spectrum, Winnicott notes, there is the technician, who diagnoses and treats, and at the other end of the spectrum, there is the minister, who provides care. Winnicott in his talk makes the case for a more holistic approach, one in which doctors would be capable of what he calls "cross identifications"—i.e., "the ability to stand in the other person's shoes, and allowing the converse"—and care-curing (p. 118). Winnicott sees care-curing as an extension of his concept of holding, where the mother provides a facilitating environment that enables the possibility of growth. And so, Winnicott writes, "I suggest that we find in the care-cure aspect of our professional work a setting for the application of principles that we learned at the beginning of our lives, when as immature persons we were given good-enough care, and cure, so to speak, in advance (the best kind of preventative medicine) by our 'good-enough' mothers, and by our parents" (p. 120). Whatever one may think about Winnicott's notion of "good-enough" mothers (cf. Capps, 2005 & Carlin, 2007), it is hard to disagree with his plea for caring to be brought back into medicine. Winnicott suggests that cross-identifying ought to be a part of medical education, and while I would support this move, I am not optimistic about its incorporation in the curriculums of medical schools. But I am optimistic about what chaplains and pastors are already doing. And so if it seems too much to ask doctors to be care-curers, then certainly we should increase our support of pastors and chaplains so that caring, not simply curing, is provided for patients today.

I have made the case that chaplains and pastors should inquire about the patient's experience and about what would make her stay better, and that pastors and chaplains should make these inquiries with certain psychoanalytic concepts in mind. My guess is, just like the choices of particular transitional and transformational objects, each patient's answer will be very idiosyncratic and that their needs will be as various as their situations (e.g., some patients will be in acute care, others chronic; some will be giving birth, others will be suffering from dementia). And perhaps for many patients the chaplain herself will function as a transitional object for the patient. In any case, what is needed is attention to the idiosyncrasies of individuals, which pastors and chaplains should be giving to those in their care, because, as William James, quoting a carpenter, once remarked: "There is very little difference between one man and another; but what little there is, *is very important*" (quoted in Dykstra, 2005a, p. 8).

I began this paper by noting that robotic nurses are on the way. And they may be able to do many remarkable tasks in the future, but for attention to the idiosyncrasies of individuals—attention to see when patients are feeling anxious and afraid, and attention to what they think might make their stay better—there is simply no substitute for caring.

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Biographical Note

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Women of Substance: The Fox Sisters— Influential Voices of the Spiritualist Movement in 19th Century America

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Introduction

March 31, 2008, the 160th anniversary of the advent of the American-made religion of modern Spiritualism, is much more than a date on a calendar. It is a surprising testimonial of endurance and perseverance for a movement that seemingly began as an accident with quite humble, if not obscure, beginnings. It was on March 31, 1848, when two young sisters—Katie and Maggie Fox—began to receive intelligent responses from an unknown entity that had been vexing the Fox family since their recent move into their home. The modest, two-story cottage in Hydesville, New York had been plagued by a series of rappings that were especially noticeable at night, causing the family to become quite fatigued and weary from lack of sleep. (Goldsmith, 28) It was on this night, however, the eve of "April Fool's Day," that the girls decided to test the disincarnate spirit by commanding the entity to mimic their actions.

Ostensibly, with a bit of effort and ingenuity, Katie and Maggie conversed with the entity by developing a simple code using handclapping that corresponded to "yes" and "no" questions and numbers.

> Together, Mrs. Fox and her daughters began to ask questions. Mrs. Fox first asked the mystery rapper to count to ten—it did. She then asked the spirit to reveal the ages of her daughters—it gave a rap for each of the girl's age correctly. She asked if it was a human being making these rapping noises—there was no answer. She then asked it to make two raps if it was a spirit—it did. She continued by asking if the spirit had been injured in their home—this question followed with two raps. (Leonard, 27)

Affectionately, the two sisters began calling the unknown spirit "Mr. Split-foot."[1] (Melton, 94) Not nearly as enamored with this unwanted visitor as her daughters, an alarmed Mrs. Margaret Fox asked her husband to come witness what was transpiring. The always pragmatic and rational Mr. John Fox initially felt that a simple explanation would solve the mystery, but after being taunted by the raps that seemed to originate in all corners of the room, the ceiling, and from the floor, he, too, was bewildered and stumped to find any logical reason for the rappings.

Determined to get to the bottom of the supernatural conundrum plaguing her family, Mrs. Fox then summoned friends and neighbors to enter their home to serve as witnesses to the otherworldly occurrence that had all of them not only nervous wrecks, but bewitched by what it could mean. With the help of their concerned neighbors, the Foxes eventually developed a code that matched the number of raps to letters in the alphabet. Albeit time-consuming, they were able to discern that the spirit's name was Charles B. Rosna and that he had been murdered in that house some years previously and his remains were buried in the cellar.[2] (Jackson, 4)

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[1] This nickname most likely is in reference to the Devil, as Satan is often depicted as a creature with "hoofed" or "split" feet. This was a common Victorian reference to the Devil during this time period.

[2] It was purported, and subsequently became a part of historical record, that when the Fox cottage's cellar was eventually excavated, indeed human teeth, hair, and bones were discovered there. It was

> Several far-reaching features emerged from those initial rappings: 1) it was proven that communication that was intelligible could be made with spirits; 2) certain people, like the Fox sisters, were naturally gifted with the ability to make this communication; and 3) communication could be facilitated by means of a code. The events on this night started a movement of the likes the world had never seen before. Soon, people from all over were flocking to the Fox cottage to witness this supernatural phenomenon. The birth of [modern] psychic mediumship, and some time later, the religion known as Spiritualism, had begun. (Leonard, 28)

Literally overnight, word of the "Hydesville Rappings" spread far and wide, with the news eventually reaching Katie and Maggie's older sister, Mrs. Leah Fish, in Rochester, New York in May of 1848. She immediately returned to Hydesville upon learning about the manifestations in her parents' home. Leah was very quick to appreciate that the story and the surrounding publicity it generated had great potential for profit. In short order, Leah turned her sisters' abilities to talk with the dead into a stage act. She soon became the *raison d`etre* for what would become a new religious movement, managing the girls rigidly, forcing them to give non-stop readings, requiring them to hold public demonstrations, and, of course, pressuring them to lead séances. Mrs. Fish soon realized that she, too, had the "gift" and was quite anxious to get in on the act.

Before long, after news of the Fox sisters' mediumship ability became well-known, a number of "intuitives" began to claim similar abilities. In a few short years, millions of people claimed to be adherents of the new religion of Spiritualism.

> ...in 1854, the New England Spiritualists Association estimated the number of spiritualists[3] in the United States as 2 million, and the *North American Review* gave its opinion that that figure was reasonable. *The Spiritual Register*, a popular annual serial compiled by spiritualists, estimated the number of spiritualists in 1860 as 1,600,000 but suggested that the number of nominal believers was 5 million.[4] (Buescher, x)

Spiritualism, unlike most religions that have a prescribed belief system to which their followers adhere and practice faithfully, was more experiential in that one was regarded as a Spiritualist "simply by trying the spirits and being encouraged by the results." (Buescher, xi)

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not until some fifty-six years later, however, that the further discovery of a complete human skeleton was found in the cellar of the cottage that seemed to prove the story of a peddler being murdered in the house. These collaborating facts were reported in the *Boston Journal* (a non-Spiritualistic newspaper) on November 23, 1904. (Doyle, 73; Stuart, 17)

[3] Some authors and researchers denote Spiritualism and Spiritualists in the lower-case. As a religion, however, similar to Christianity, Judaism, or Islam, it is the opinion of this researcher that these terms should be capitalized; even denominations within a religion (*i.e.* Christianity—such as Presbyterian, Baptist or Episcopalian) consistently regard these as proper nouns and are hence capitalized. For the purposes of this study, unless directly quoted from another source, the words Spiritualism and Spiritualist will be capitalized.

[4] The term "nominal believers" refers to those who may have not fully embraced Spiritualism as a religion, but were quite happy to attend Spiritualist meetings, séances, and to receive readings from Spiritualist mediums. Historically, it has been difficult to ascertain an exact number of adherents to Spiritualism at any given time because many people throughout its history have publicly embraced a more mainstream, traditional religion, but practiced Spiritualism as a secondary religion (often secretly) due to the turmoil association to Spiritualism would cause them personally from family, friends, and the community. This bias is still true today among many Spiritualists.

Regardless of *how many* people were considered to be Spiritualists in the years that followed the Fox sisters' revelations, one stratum of Victorian America—a clearly disenfranchised segment of society—enthusiastically embraced the idea and concept of Spiritualism, and the potential of what this new religion had to offer: *women*.

The mid-1800s was a time period that was not at all kind to the "fairer" sex. Women had few (if any) substantial rights; they were, in essence, regarded as property of their husbands (if single, then, the property of the family patriarch, whether that was a living father, brother, or other male relative). Women were considered to be too feeble-minded to have an intelligent opinion of their own, let alone being allowed to pursue anything of substance in the public arena (*i.e.* politics, religion, or education). Many women at the time were relegated to a life steeped in social protocol and subservience to their husbands' opinions and knowledge (they were expected to defer completely to their husbands for any decision that concerned them personally or that which affected their own lives or livelihood).

In 1848, the time was ripe for sweeping change to occur in the United States. Women were beginning to demand change in the suffrage movement; abolitionists were fighting for equality for African-American slaves; parishioners of mainstream churches were beginning to question the austere and Puritanical rules that governed their religious beliefs and faith.

> July of 1848 witnessed an event that helped shape the future of the United States: the Seneca Falls Convention, the first women's rights assembly organized in America. The meeting took place in the Burned-over District,[5] on a site about forty miles from Rochester and less than twenty from Hydesville. ...The twin struggles for the abolition of slavery and women's rights were closely allied in the 1840s and 1850s, although conflict eventually erupted over differing priorities. Many abolitionists were also feminists. The plight of women, whatever their race, was compared in kind if not in severity to the bondage imposed on enslaved African-Americans: women too were considered inferior and treated as subordinate by the dominant white male culture; they too were denied the vote and opportunities to work and be educated and, if married, the right to control their own wages and property, to sign contracts, and to protect their bodies from their husbands' unwanted advances. ...Many of those in attendance [at the Seneca Falls Convention], such as Frederick Douglass, the famed abolitionist and author, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, an emerging leader of the women's rights movement, had already heard about the possibility of spirit communication through their Rochester acquaintances, and others soon learned of it. Raps were reported to have struck the very table at which Stanton and her colleague, Lucretia Mott, had drafted the convention's resolution. (Weisberg, 64)

Indeed, the year 1848 ushered in the start of a number of significant movements that would change the texture of America's tapestry forever. Not only were women exerting pressure on the establishment for their own independence, but these same women were fighting for the freedom of African-American slaves. It is no surprise, then, that these same women viewed the new movement—and eventual religion of Spiritualism—as a form of

[5] The Burned-over District refers to the area in western New York that gave birth to a number of religious movements in the 1800s. "[Western New York] provided fertile ground for the second wave of what was known as the Great Awakening. So fiery was the spirit of revival in upstate New York and New England, where it was strongest..." (Goldsmith, 11) Revival meetings were at the heart of these movements, which included Quakerism, Universal Friend, Mormonism, and Millerites. (Weisberg, 37)

salvation.

Of course, Spiritualism (as a religion) offered an alternative to the stodgy belief systems that were prevalent at the time. In particular, it advocated the redemption of all souls (no matter how sinful the person was in life); the negation of heaven and hell as locations (maintaining that they are merely conditions, and both can be earthbound); the denial of original sin (children have enough opportunity in life to stray from a moral path, without being tainted from the moment they are born due to the actions of Adam and Eve); the rejection of the belief in vicarious atonement (preferring to believe that each person has a personal responsibility to atone for sins committed, rather than depending upon salvation through the death on the cross of Jesus); the belief that Jesus, The Christ, was a gifted healer, teacher and psychic (but was no more divine or the son of God than any other avatar or living person); the interpretation of the Resurrection of Jesus as being in spirit-form (and not of the physical body); and the belief that women are as capable of doing God's work as men.

Most importantly, perhaps, Spiritualism offered women an opportunity to have a vocation—it gave women enough fortitude and personal independence to develop a career at a time when women were not allowed to work (with the exception of teaching music, being a seamstress, or instructing the etiquette of proper behavior and domesticity to young girls who hoped to attract suitable men to marry). Suddenly, women were able to make a living on their own, through mediumship, enabling them to earn a living without necessarily having to marry a man to survive financially.

This type of independence scared the bejesus out of men who were quite content with the current status quo. The proverbial genie was out of the bottle, however, and women were becoming more and more independent with their new found ability to make money. More and more women were being encouraged by the blossoming women's movement. Finally, there was a formal campaign working on behalf of women to improve their lives and rights everywhere.

Facing a certain level of reform in this area (whether they liked it or not), the male-dominated establishment gradually, but reluctantly, rationalized these new social changes by accepting the idea that perhaps women could pursue mediumship, reasoning that women (and children) were so feeble in their thought processes that it had to be spirit communication that allowed women to be so eloquent and knowledgeable in their séances and readings. After all, the vast majority of spirits that came through the medium were male entities.

> The idea that the words mediums spoke were not their own had some decided advantages for women, who had few rights, little education, and extremely limited options in the society of the time. Weakness and passivity anchored their femininity, while the spirit working through them pushed them into realms where they would have never dared venture under their own power.
>
> In the mid-1800s, when women who tried to speak in public might well be booed off the stage and even attacked by rough crowds, female trance mediums were able to support careers with speaking engagements across the country. A key difference between them and other women was the idea that men were speaking through them. It was easy for everyone to agree that a woman couldn't know so much or speak so well, therefore spirits must be involved. (Wicker, 155)

As the religion of Spiritualism grew, it would embody many of the liberal, cutting edge

ideas that were driving the women's movement and abolitionism.[6] Why can women not take leadership roles in the church? What is wrong with whites and blacks attending the same church? Prominently, at the head of parades pushing for social change and protesting vocally with placards, were suffragettes and abolitionists; and a goodly percentage of these activists were actually avowed Spiritualists. Finally, a religion that allowed and encouraged equality was at hand; this excited women (and the men who supported their efforts). Women could not only be their own person, they could also be recognized as leaders, having vocations that earned them money as mediums, and they could become ministers in the Spiritualist church.

The women who were thrust into the roles of becoming Spiritualism's torchbearers were the Fox sisters. Initially, not one of them could foresee—no matter how psychic they were—the impact on American religion and women's rights, or the widespread repercussions and tumultuous events, that were to become intricate parts of their lives and, in the end, shape their legacies. Perhaps an unanticipated result of their mediumship was how the movement they unwittingly started turned into a windfall for women's rights, attracting nationally known suffragettes and abolitionists to their movement.

As a result of their spirit communication, and the ensuing movement that it inspired, a number of women were encouraged by their work—not merely as the women who were charged with propagating the religion as widely as possible, but also as the women who would be searching for their own personal voices. This allowed them to become free-thinking women of substance, making them instruments of change in paving the way for future liberties and freedoms enjoyed by American women today. Their journeys were not easy, by any means, and the struggles and hardships they endured are a testament to their courage and tenacity.

The Fox Sisters

As the original founders of Spiritualism, the Fox sisters, Leah, Maggie and Katie were at the heart of the Spiritualist movement from its inception. To varying degrees, each sister played a pivotal role in the successes and failures of the emerging movement.

At times, Maggie and Katie seemed to find solace in their mediumship striving to serve their fellow physical and spiritual beings for the highest good; other times they cursed their gifts and the responsibilities these brought to them. Unpredictable in their behavior (due to years of alcoholism and built-up resentment of their older sister, Leah) Maggie and Katie damaged the movement tremendously when they denounced Spiritualism as a fraud and hoax—only to recant their claims later.

Maggie and Katie practiced their mediumship off and on until they made their transition as poor and destitute alcoholics. Leah faired much better, having been the force behind the two younger sisters' careers. There was always a feeling of animosity toward Leah by the younger sisters in that somehow she was able to enrich herself handsomely at their expense. Truly, when the Fox sisters enjoyed great highs, they were at their best—physically, financially and spiritually; but when they experienced the inevitable lows during their lives, they tended to sink so low that they were barely able to survive.

[6] Even today, Spiritualism does not shy away from social, moral or political issues that many other denominations choose to avoid. Spiritualists believe strongly in Divine Order and freewill. A person's soul journey is difficult enough without having to endure intolerance, hatred, and bigotry by society. No moral judgments are made, theoretically, allowing each person to find his/her own path to spiritual truth. The National Spiritualist Association of Churches (NSAC) headquartered in Lily Dale, New York, has a list of social statements voted upon by the membership that ranges in scope from abortion, to the legitimacy of children, sexual orientation, to the death penalty.

Ironically, although the three sisters enjoyed great notoriety and became the toast of New York's elite society, being wined and dined by famous industrialists, politicians, and philanthropists, they also suffered greatly for their beliefs and mediumship. Frequently, they were tormented and heckled mercilessly by the public. Sadly, at times, they did the same to each other.

Leah Fox, the tour de force of early Spiritualism, and the first of the three Fox sisters to be depicted in this paper, offers a vignette into how the movement began and how it was initially propagated. No doubt her tireless work was originally self-serving in that she was trying to enrich herself through Spiritualism, but an unlikely outcome—and one she surely had not anticipated—was it opened the door for many women to pursue a life outside the confines of marriage. The opportunity to earn a living afforded women a sense of independence and personal achievement, something the majority of women had not experienced previously.

Leah Fox Fish Brown Underhill[7]

Leah Fox Fish Brown Underhill (See figure 1) was a force to be reckoned with, causing other members of the Fox family to cringe in fear when her wrath was unleashed. Being much older than Maggie and Katie, she was the matronly sister who would take charge of her younger sisters' mediumship and manage their early careers (similar to that of a stage-mom, agent, or publicist today). Initially, it is believed the younger Fox sisters viewed their older sister with affection and appreciation. However, not unlike modern-day families who attempt to manage the entertainment careers of their own children or siblings, Leah's best intentions for her sisters may have been clouded by a desire for more emoluments, causing her to exploit the young girls for her own financial gain. Her increasingly heavy-handed and strict demeanor eventually caused the younger sisters to resent her bitterly to the point of hatred.

Although not well-to-do, Leah did know how to ingratiate herself to those who were. Independent by nature, Leah divorced her first husband, Bowman Fish, at a time when the stigma of divorce was such that it made her a marked woman. Suddenly, Leah found herself a single mother who needed to provide for both herself and her daughter, Lizzie. Being adept at playing the piano, she did what any respectable woman of the era was allowed to do—she gave music lessons to children. Barely covering monthly expenses, this type of work was not lucrative for amassing a fortune; she was merely subsisting.

Unexpectedly, when her sisters and their mediumship presented themselves rather fortuitously, it was as if God had answered her prayers. She seized the moment by insisting the girls come live with her.[8] Undoubtedly she was concerned for their welfare, initially,

[7] Leah Fox Fish was a divorced 33-year-old mother when news of the rappings first reached her in May of 1848. Leah and her first husband, Bowman Fish, had a daughter named "Lizzie." After divorcing, Leah made a living in Rochester, New York, as a piano teacher to the children of affluent families. Once the Spiritualist movement began in earnest, she accepted a proposal of marriage by a former foster child of the Fox family, Calvin Brown. Mr. Brown had served as a protector, of sorts, for the Fox women, but later became deathly ill. As a friend to the family, he worried about how society would view a divorced woman, like Leah, who was becoming a celebrity. By marrying her, she would be much better regarded by society as a "widowed" wife than a "divorced" woman. Upon Mr. Brown's death, and a number of years later (1858), she married a wealthy widower named Daniel Underhill. A Spiritualist, Mr. Underhill, voraciously defended Leah's mediumship from critics, and proposed marriage largely due to their common interests in Spiritualism and the fact they both were widowed. (Stuart, 215)

[8] At first, only Katie came to live with Leah and Lizzie. It was thought that the rappings were stronger when the two younger sisters were together in Hydesville, so by separating them, it was hoped the rappings would subside. Later, Mrs. Fox and Maggie traveled to Rochester to stay with Leah, her

because the chaotic situation that had been generated in Hydesville was no place for young impressionable girls. It was not long, however, until the opportunistic side of her took over and she started to turn what could have been a fluke occurrence that would be easily forgotten when the next big piece of news happened, into a veritable movement. Leah had to proceed carefully, though, ensuring her virtue and integrity, and that of her sisters, remained intact.

Figure 1: Leah Fox Fish Brown Underhill

Victorian protocol of the day was austere and unforgiving toward women who did not conduct themselves in the most dignified and honorable fashion. A wayward glance in the wrong direction could cause a scandal that would stain a woman's unblemished reputation for life. Getting around such rules and conventions was quite problematic because Leah knew very well that men had more money than women, and by having men of power sitting in their séance room would insure their financial solvency. As Victorian as Miss Leah was publicly, she certainly was not above allowing her sisters and herself the occasional minor exploitation to ensure repeat visits to their séance room by these men of influence and power.[9] The sisters often caused quite a stir amongst the women attendees, wives, and fiancées at their séances.

> It should have been no surprise that the sisters evoked jealousy because their popularity was based, at least in part, on their [gender]. At a time when it was considered poor manners for gentlemen to stare at attractive young women at parties, dinners, and at other social occasions, Leah displayed herself and her pretty younger sisters for hours on end to men who could gaze upon them without reproach. (Stuart, 66-67)

At the height of the Fox sisters' popularity among New York high society, their every move and utterance was analyzed and reported upon by the print media. The public just could not get enough of them, wanting to know every intimate detail of their public and private lives. The Fox sisters' fame and notoriety had become so intense that it can only be compared to the modern fascination with celebrity figures like Britney Spears, Lindsay

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daughter Lizzie, and Katie.

[9] Initially, the girls' mother, Mrs. Fox, was not at all pleased with their new found notoriety and fame. She did not take kindly to her daughters being paraded around town and being in mixed company with men without proper chaperoning and supervision. Gradually, her vigilance wore down as Leah took more control from her regarding Maggie and Katie's appearances and work schedules. Also, Mrs. Fox was a pragmatic woman, so she worried whether working was in the best interest of her daughters because it could make them undesirable for marriage. On the one hand, she worried about their reputations and place in society, but on the other, she relished the perks and opulence the notoriety provided to them as a family.

Lohan, and Paris Hilton. Had paparazzi photographers been around in the mid-1800s, no doubt they would have hounded and pursued the three sisters as relentlessly as the media and gossip columnists pursue today's celebrities. Indeed, the three sisters were the toast of New York and had at their beck and call the power and social elite of the day, clamoring to be given an audience with them, as well as doing anything possible to have an opportunity to sit in the sisters' séance room.

In addition, they had powerful adversaries in the form of outspoken critics and envious competitors who wished nothing more than for the sisters to pack up and leave town to return from whence they came. None of these points were ever lost on Leah who controlled the girls with a strong hand. She knew very well that an unfounded rumor, let alone any girlish dalliance or imprudent mischief on their part, could do irreparable harm to Maggie and Katie's reputations as chaste and maidenly women. Or worse, it could damage their new found vocation that was becoming quite lucrative for the three, which allowed them to live quite comfortably.

In order to attract more clients and adherents to the new movement, Leah cleverly adopted elements from other religious and spiritual traditions and movements to form the basis of what would eventually become Spiritualist beliefs and liturgy. She was quite instrumental in developing underlying details to the belief system by organizing various rituals and aspects of spirituality into what would later be used to form Spiritualist traditions and practices.

> Leah modeled her new séances upon the familiar pattern of a religious service. Once guests arrived, they gathered around a table and recited an opening prayer. Then they sang a hymn, such as "The Spirit's Song" or "Hymn of the New Jerusalem," which was named after the church that had memorialized Swedenborg[10] and his teachings. Its words, set to piano music by Leah, were taken from an obscure nineteenth-century poem entitled "The Haunted Spring." What followed was a joining of hands and a few moments of silence that bore a striking resemblance to the start of a traditional Quaker meeting. Simultaneously, Maggie or Katie or both closed their eyes and fell into a half-conscious dream state, or trance. Before long, their audiences heard the faint sound of ghostly raps. (Stuart, 44)

Interestingly, mid-nineteenth century attendees of séances were not at all shocked or disturbed by the trance work of mediums because they were very familiar with biblical figures and medieval saints who often went into trance. (Stuart, 44) Also, during this time period, there was a trendy cure for just about any ailment that sometimes caused clients to become hypnotized and to fall in trance-like states. It was called *Mesmerism*.[11]

As the Spiritualist movement evolved into the religion of "Spiritualism," Leah had slowly

[10] Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) is considered to be the true precursor to modern Spiritualism. He experienced visions in which he visited the spirit world. He wrote prolifically on the subject of spirituality, believing he had been called upon by God to give a new revelation to humanity. His works influenced future Spiritualists a great deal. (Leonard, 51) "Swedenborg had visualized Heaven not as a static state but as a dynamic field, in which spirits and angels led lives that resembled human lives but sanctified and made glorious." (Buescher, 132)

[11] Fredrich Anton Mesmer developed a theory called "animal magnetism" in which clients would attempt to have their body balanced via a contraption called a *bacquet,* which was an oak tub filled with iron filings and broken glass; bottles filled with iron rods protruded outward toward the client. The idea was that magnetic rays would shower the client. During this process, many of the clients would fall into a trance-like or hypnotic state during the treatment. This is where the term "mesmerized" comes from. (Leonard, 56)

lost influence and control over her sisters. After all, she had remarried a wealthy widower, Daniel Underhill, who provided quite well for her and her needs. Even though she continued her work in Spiritualism, it was not the motivating force it once was. It had served its purpose.

In 1885, Leah published a book entitled *The Missing Link in Spiritualism* as a way to revive the movement because it had, by that time, fallen out of favor with the public due to the fraudulent practices perpetrated by some of its mediums. Of course, the book portrayed Leah in a positive light, detailing her and her sisters' rise from small-town bumpkins to international celebrities. (Stuart, xii) This publication did (not surprisingly) create a legacy for Leah as it meticulously detailed the work she did on behalf of Spiritualism. Regardless of her initial motivations—whether they were genuine or opportunistic—Leah did much to transform what could have been a mere spiritual anomaly into a religion. For if it were not for her quick thinking and persevering attitude in those initial months and ensuing years after the original rappings, the world may never have experienced—to the extent it did—spirit communication and the eventual religion of Spiritualism. Some would maintain the world would have been better off without Spiritualism, but to adherents and sincere believers, just the opposite is true.

Maggie Fox Kane

The second sister in the triumvirate of Fox sisterhood was Maggie Fox Kane (See figure 2) who was fifteen years old when the Hydesville Rappings occurred. By all accounts, she had a beguiling beauty[12] that was accentuated by her raven hair and dark, deep-set eyes. This beauty did not go unnoticed, drawing the attention of many a male sitter in her séance room.

Maggie was an impetuous girl who was not at all happy about moving from a more cosmopolitan area to the countryside where Hydesville was located. She was easily bored with farm life and preferred the opportunities that urban living offered. When the rappings occurred, she and her younger sister, Katie, were thrown into a whirlwind of excitement that would be dizzying to anyone, let alone to an adolescent girl prone to childish pranks.

After the rappings, Leah first returned to Rochester with Katie, and then later Mrs. Fox brought Maggie to live there as well. Mrs. Fox stayed on as a chaperone to make sure her younger daughters did not get into mischief that might hurt their future chances to marry. The opportunity to live with her older sister, Leah, in the big city of Rochester was deliverance, of sorts, to Maggie who had grown tired of country life. By doing so, though, she basically made a pact with the devil in that she would be required by her older sister to follow her rules and direction regarding her gift of mediumship. At first, this was of no consequence as she was a young girl, on the verge of womanhood, embarking upon a new adventure.

[12] Not everyone thought Maggie was a beauty. One man, an editor of the *Merchant's Day Book*, described her as follows: "[Maggie's] manners are rather prepossessing, and although not decidedly a beauty, she has a mild and gentle expression of countenance...." (Dewey in Weisberg, 101)

Figure 2: Margaret (Maggie) Fox Kane

A few short years after the original rappings, in 1852, Maggie caught the eye of Dr. Elisha Kent Kane, the famed Arctic explorer and international celebrity. (Doyle, 89)

> It's not clear why [Kane] attended his first séance in the fall of 1852. He may have been curious about the manifestations or looking for an hour's entertainment or perhaps seeking relief from his suffering over [his brother] Willie's death. Whatever the reasons, he was thunderstruck at first sight of Maggie and in the following months returned repeatedly to see her. (Stuart, 158)

The chivalrous explorer at first did not make too much of an impression on young Maggie. However, being a man of consequence who had international notoriety for conquering the great Arctic ice mass, he did not give up easily. His persistence paid off as she gradually warmed to him, and he to her. He professed his love to her secretly, and promised to marry her if she gave up mediumship and Spiritualism completely. She tried to reason with him, insisting that it was a gift and she had not chosen it, but it had chosen her—like breathing, it was a part of her, and she could not stop what was meant to be.

It is difficult to know why Maggie was reluctant to give up her mediumship. After all, the opportunity to marry a dashing and famous Arctic explorer was every woman's dream in the mid-1800s. Perhaps she was worried about giving up her one source of income, in case Elisha would decide not to follow through with his promises. Also, it was no secret that Elisha's aristocratic family did not approve of his seeing Maggie (hence the reason it had to be kept secret); his family had another, more suitable woman they wished for him to marry. Maggie's pragmatism of the situation could have caused her to hesitate. Or, she truly felt her mediumship and Spiritualism was a gift from God and like denying the color of one's eyes, how could she deny something so innate to her being?

After some time, in 1856, and with more intense pressuring from Elisha, Maggie finally agreed to his demands—she would give up mediumship and Spiritualism completely. In return, he would be her nearest and dearest; he would support her financially on the condition she attended a private finishing school away from New York City; and he promised he would wed her.

> Elisha asked Maggie if she would like him to repeat his vow of marriage before her mother. Taking that pledge before a group of witnesses, he solemnly explained, would legally make them man and wife. ...Within moments, the couple had summoned Katie, Mrs. Fox, a servant, and an unidentified friend into the parlor. Standing next to Maggie, Elisha placed his right hand in hers, while his left hand encircled her tiny waist and declared, "Maggie is my wife, and I am her husband. Wherever we are, she is mine, and I am hers. Do you understand and consent to this, Maggie?" ...With that

> mutual exchange of vows, Elisha and Maggie were wed. The marriage was as legitimate as one that had been performed in a church, Elisha explained to Mrs. Fox, promising her and Maggie that it would be publicly announced when he returned from Europe the following May. (Stuart, 189-190)

Previously, Elisha had gone away for several years on an Arctic expedition that went terribly wrong. He miraculously survived that expedition, but it took its toll on his vitality and health, leaving him weak and debilitated. Due to his insistence of keeping their association secret, and the fact that he had left Maggie before when he went exploring, and was about to leave again to travel to Europe, Mrs. Fox was concerned he was not sincere in his intention of marriage to her daughter. The marriage ceremony he concocted in the Fox sister's parlor was meant to reassure not only Maggie, but also Mrs. Fox. After all, rumors were already swirling around New York (and the country) about their secret romance and betrothal, causing Elisha's family great consternation. Maggie Fox was not from the same social class as the Kane's, making her unworthy to join their family. The fact she was a working medium, albeit at a time when this profession was gaining widespread acceptance, was far below their strict adherence to social protocol. Also, being a Spiritualist, even one of its founders, did not bolster her stature in their eyes.

There was a certain foreboding attitude that Elisha had regarding this particular trip to Europe. He even went so far as to take "measures to insure Maggie's financial security if he did not return. In the event of his death, he had already informed Mrs. Fox, he had provided for Maggie in his will." (Stuart, 191) Elisha's intuition was correct. He suffered a bout of rheumatic fever, and at the advice of his doctors in England, left for Cuba. En route he suffered a stroke and upon arriving in the Caribbean, he died rather prematurely in 1857.

> With the news of glamorous Dr. Kane's untimely demise, America mourned as a nation. In cities and towns large and small, mayors, statesmen, and dignitaries felt obliged to commemorate the hero's death with funeral ceremonies unprecedented in the brief history of the United States, the likes of which were not seen again until President Lincoln was assassinated. (Stuart, 198)

Maggie was thrown into a period of mourning from which she would never fully recover. Unable to say her proper goodbyes to her beloved Elisha, largely due to social protocol of the day and the deep-seated animosity the Kane family had toward her, she slowly descended into a downward spiral that caused her to resort to whatever means necessary in order to survive.

The Kane family, of course, did not recognize the marriage she claimed to have had with Elisha. As a way to silence her, for a time, she received an allowance to live from Elisha's brother. This was not done as a way to honor his brother's wishes, but was self-serving in that he was interested in gaining control of the love letters his brother, Elisha, had sent to Maggie. The Kane family most surely wanted them destroyed to silence any further speculation of the alleged relationship that still had people talking. As a last resort, Maggie felt compelled to publish *The Love-Life of Dr. Kane* to prove once and for all that "she had not only been romantically involved with the Arctic explorer but had secretly become his wife." (Stuart, x) Unfortunately, with all the legal wrangling and ongoing battles with the Kane family occurring over a number of years, by the time the book was published in 1865, it made little impact upon the public. Maggie received very little in the form of royalties, causing her to despair even more: Firstly, she felt she had betrayed the memory of her Elisha by publishing their most intimate correspondence; and secondly, she broke her promise to Elisha by returning to her mediumship to make ends meet.

As a coping mechanism, Maggie turned to alcohol to drown her sorrows away. Her taste for liquor, however, started when she was quite young. When she and Katie first came to New York, they were lavishly entertained; their hosts thought it amusing when the young sisters became flushed after drinking a bit of champagne. This is how it started, and eventually alcohol would be the downfall of both Maggie and Katie, never fully being able to get off the bottle.

Maggie's life kept taking a more severe turn for the worse as she drank more and more. Her benefactor of many years, the famed owner of the New York Tribune and friend, Horace Greeley, was quite alarmed at her drinking. He was determined to get her help, which he did. But her sobriety would only last until a wave of depression or despair would come over her, and again, she would turn to alcohol to numb her pain. The cycle of alcoholism and sobriety over the years affected Maggie's reputation and public standing. Her unpredictable behavior became a source of public ridicule. Her hatred of Leah was intensified as she searched for someone to blame for her troubles and unhappiness.

In her tell-all book, *The Death-Blow to Spiritualism* (first published in 1888), Maggie insisted that she and Katie were merely playing a trick on their parents which went terribly awry. Once the neighbors were brought in, and everyone believed the sounds to be from spirits, she and Katie had to continue on with their "April Fool's" joke. In her book, Maggie maintained that the raps were nothing more than the manipulation of toe joints by the two sisters which created the hollow sounding knocks or raps. Later, she and Katie both recanted these allegations of fraud, stating they agreed to travel the country lecturing on the evils of Spiritualism, and Maggie only published the book, because of their dire financial situations. They had been promised hefty speaking fees and royalties for denouncing Spiritualism, which never really materialized.

Most likely, the two sisters were so fed up with being handled by others (especially Leah) that years of built-up resentment led to their revelations of fraud. Who could blame them? They had been at it since childhood—for over four decades. Those who witnessed the rappings personally, throughout the history of their mediumship work, maintained that the rappings could not have been manufactured by Maggie or Katie physically. The Fox sisters definitely had their detractors who were so convinced they were frauds that they would do just about anything to expose them to their adoring public.

Early in their careers, one particular person who was especially interested in unmasking their mediumship was Dr. Austin Flint, editor of the *Buffalo Medical Journal*. Along with two other men of influence, Dr. John Wilson Coventry and Dr. Charles Alfred Lee, the three published a "Letter to the Editor" in the *Buffalo Commercial Advertiser* stating that the sounds were manufactured by Maggie by manipulating her knee joints. (Stuart, 84)

Upon learning about this, Leah immediately went into damage control and demanded an investigation into the allegations, using the negative publicity to her advantage. She even threatened to sue the *Buffalo Commercial Advertiser* for libel.

> On February 26, [1851] the formal examination began. As visitors walked into the private parlor of the Phelps House hotel, they saw Maggie and Leah sitting upon chairs or sofas before the grim-faced Flint, Lee, and Coventry. Day after day the doctors listened to the raps, twisting and turning the sisters this way and that and ordering them into various positions on sofas and chairs. Once when Maggie was asked to stretch her legs out on the sofa and Leah placed hers on the floor, the raps ceased. When asked why, Leah had a clever answer: The spirits refused to rap because of the doctors' obviously hostile attitude. (Stuart, 85) (See Figure 3)

Figure 3: Examination of the Fox sisters by Dr. Austin Flint, 1851.

These investigations, as thorough as they were, were never completely conclusive in the sense that the sisters would enjoy several more decades of mediumship without being proven frauds, definitively. In fact, it was only their own admission that caused people to really take the allegations of fraud seriously.

Hence, at the age of fifty-five, her notorious career as a medium well behind her, Maggie decided to expose Spiritualism as a fraud, along with her sister Katie, only to recant the allegations later. The damage had been done, giving critics and skeptics of the religion much ammunition to denounce Spiritualism, mediums and spirit communication categorically. True believers, though, would not and could not accept the notion that the entire Spiritualist religion was nothing more than an elaborate hoax that started off as a childish prank. Too many people had communicated with spirits. Even more people had received confirming messages from the spirit world.

> Several of the mediums said that they could hardly believe their eyes when they read of Mrs. Margaret Fox Kane's determination, and they declared almost unanimously that "she would not do it if she were in her senses." They accuse her of excessive indulgence in drink and hint that she is not responsible for what she says. (Stuart, 292)

The confession of fraud by Maggie and Katie affected millions of avowed Spiritualists. Interestingly, due to the erratic behavior of Maggie and Katie, the majority of Spiritualists refused to believe their admissions of fraud and continued following the religion earnestly. Perhaps people had too many independent confirmations from a variety of mediums to forsake completely a belief system that gave them comfort and peace of mind, especially about death.

Katie Fox Jencken

The third Fox sister, Catharine (Katie) Fox Jencken, (See Figure 4) was the youngest of the Fox sisters when the Hydesville Rappings occurred in 1848. She was a mere eleven

years old. Maggie was fifteen at the time, on the verge of womanhood. Being so young, Katie was easily led by her older sisters. If the allegations of fraud are indeed true—that the sisters manufactured the rappings by manipulating their toe joints—then Katie may have been too young to remember clearly the original hoax. On many occasions, she insisted that she was a true believer and was able to converse with spirits. When she was twelve years old, her oldest sister, Leah, insisted that the spirits were real, a concept that Katie had already accepted. (Stuart, 2007)

Katie's young age when the rappings occurred, and the years that followed, allowed her some protection from scrutiny and prying eyes. Her older sisters, Leah and Maggie, were the ones who were subjected to the many lengthy and, at times, outlandish tests to try to find a worldly explanation for the seemingly other-worldly raps. Katie's youth precluded her from being the center of such intensive inquiry.

Figure 4: Catharine (Katie) Fox

As Katie grew older, and as Maggie began to waiver in her mediumship, she was the constant that Leah needed to assist in séances and in readings. In the beginning, the three sisters worked together. However, once Maggie became entangled with Elisha Kent Kane, Katie was left to continue giving séances with Leah. Gradually, Katie became resentful of Leah, just as Maggie had (but not nearly to the same extent). Although her mediumship was highly respected, she took to alcohol much more quickly than her older sister, Maggie. "Worst of all, their jaded energies were renewed by the offer of wine at a time when at least one of them was hardly more than a child." (Doyle, 89)

Katie's most frequent binges occurred primarily between 1865 and 1871. (Stuart, 251) She would become sober, carrying on with her mediumship for a time, but then she inevitably returned to drinking. Katie was known for indulging in liquid "spirits" to the point she was oblivious to all and everything around her, so inebriated that she would pass out and have to be hospitalized. This cycle of drunkenness and sobriety continued on throughout her life. Her drinking did not seem to affect negatively her ability to commune with spirits.

...one March day in 1869 Katy[13] sent for Sarah,[14] informing her that she had

[13] "Katy" is one of the spellings of the younger Fox sister's name. More commonly, however, the name is spelled "Katie." Also, her formal name is sometimes spelled "Catherine" and other times "Catharine." Maggie's formal name is sometimes listed as "Margaretta" and other times as "Margaret."

[14] Sarah and George Taylor were Katie's caretakers at the Swedish Movement Cure Hospital where she would go to dry out after a particularly bad alcohol binge. They were so taken by Katie's mediumship that they wrote it down in a diary called *The Fox-Taylor Record*. In 1933, their son, William Taylor, wrote a memoir entitled *Katie Fox: Epoch-making Medium and the Making of the Fox-Taylor Record*. (Stuart, 251) This account detailed the relationship the Taylor's had with Katie and her mediumship.

> communicated with the Spirit of Sarah's deceased grandfather. Remaining skeptical as Katy put herself into a trance, Sarah found herself becoming transfixed with awe as her patient proceeded to reveal one intimate detail after another about her dead children.
>
> Over the next seven or eight months Katy delivered so many other inexplicably accurate messages—sometimes through mirror writing[15]—that Sarah and her husband, George, became convinced that she was psychically gifted. As their son William later recalled, his parents—and everyone else who knew her—felt sure that "Katie was a great medium—all classes of spirits, high and low, elect and damned, could manifest through her channel." (Stuart, 251-252)

Sarah and George Taylor were quite devoted to Katie. When she would arrive back to the hospital after one of her binges, they would do what they could to protect her already tattered reputation by cloistering her away from prying eyes. It was Sarah Taylor who profoundly tried to separate Katie from Maggie because she felt the two fed off one another's addiction, making both the worse for wear when it came to indulging in the bottle. Neither sister would have it, though—after everything they had been through, the only thing they could truly count on was one another. By this point in their lives, Maggie was completely estranged from Leah, her Elisha was gone, and her parents had passed into spirit many years before. Katie was still in contact with Leah, but fluctuated between being understanding and at the same time being bitter towards her.

The year 1871 was a bright spot for the two younger sisters: Both Maggie and Katie gave up drinking and Maggie returned to doing her mediumship again. Realizing that Katie would never be cured completely from this addiction, a real effort was made to separate her from Maggie in order to insure that she stayed sober. A longtime friend, supporter, and client—Charles Livermore—created a reason for Katie to travel to England by steamship. He reasoned to her that as an original founder of Spiritualism, she would be very well received in London where Spiritualism was very popular. Reluctantly, she agreed. As much as Maggie needed her little sister for friendship and comfort, so did Katie come to depend upon Maggie for similar reasons...and they were drinking partners, after all, which was why Katie's supporters felt she needed to go "away" for a time.[16]

England did prove to be a refreshing change of scenery for Miss Katie. As predicted, she was well received by British Spiritualists and England's elite society. Too much, in fact, in that she was yet again tempted with alcohol and succumbed to its allure.

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[15] Mirror writing, also called automatism or automatic writing, is when a script is brought through a medium that must be read by holding it up to a mirror because it is written backwards. (Bletzer, 406)

[16] Many people who were acquaintances of the Fox sisters were divided on whether Maggie was telling the truth with regards to her involvement with Elisha Kent Kane, so there was an element of distrust that dogged her after the relationship and alleged marriage surfaced. Keep in mind, the entire episode between Maggie and Elisha was kept secret, for the most part, and served as fodder for gossip; publications relished the story because it had the makings of a very tantalizing tale of love, romance, and adventure (not to mention the added Spiritualism connection). Also, many of the people who supported Katie during this time had never even met Maggie, but relied on rumors and gossip papers to base their opinions: "Sarah would meet Maggie for the first time on the steamship, in fact. Her impression of Katy's sister astonished her. This was not the depraved and careless individual she had envisioned, but instead a petite, discreetly dressed woman who looked considerably younger than her thirty-eight years, who sat in the stateroom chatting sweetly with Katy's friends and smiling politely when they were introduced." (Stuart, 257)

> Within a few days, Katy was giving séances and swept up into a dizzying schedule of parties and receptions where she was regaled with aperitifs and fine wines. ...After several weeks of refusing such temptations, Katy finally gave in, becoming so constantly intoxicated that her concerned chaperone, Blanche Ogden, rushed her off to Paris to dry out. (Stuart, 261)

Before leaving for Paris to get back on the straight and narrow, Katie was introduced to a dashing young German barrister—Henry Jencken—a naturalized British citizen. Upon her return from getting sober, he was waiting for her, and a romance was born. In April of the next year (1872), Henry asked Katie for her hand in marriage. Although she was elated and excited at the prospect, she felt it only fair to warn Henry of her addiction to alcohol for which he "brushed aside her history, assuring her that it was of little consequence, that he still wanted her for his wife." (Stuart, 262)

Most accounts regarding Katie and Henry's marriage comment upon how ideal it was. Henry was already an avowed Spiritualist which made it very easy for them to conduct their daily lives (unlike Maggie who was forced to give up her religion and mediumship while Elisha was alive).

> After returning from a honeymoon on the Continent, Katy Fox Jencken settled happily into her husband Henry's splendid townhouse at London's Brompton Court. Like her wealthy sister Leah, Katy had no thoughts of becoming a lady of leisure following her marriage. Spiritualism was all that she knew, was in her blood by then, and given her husband Henry's avid interest in it, she continued to give séances. And then, shortly after her thirty-eighth birthday, she learned she was pregnant. (Stuart 263)

Katie and Henry would have two children, named Ferdinand and Henry. The ensuing years would be pleasant and happy for the Fox-Jencken family, but sadly in November of 1881, Katie's beloved husband, Henry, died of a stroke. This prompted her immediately to make plans to return to New York with her boys; but it would be a number of years before she would be able to return due to legal wrangling over her husband's estate which she received very little, even though he was a wealthy barrister and had enjoyed a sizeable allowance from his family in Germany. To Katie's surprise, this remuneration would not transfer to her and her children after Henry's untimely death.

Initially, once in New York, Katie had hoped she and her sons could live with Leah. This became difficult as Leah wanted to control her and the boys, causing friction between the cohabitating families. Katie had a tendency to overindulge her sons and was very protective of them to the point where she preferred they stay inside the house rather than to go outside to play with other children. The stress of providing for her family as a single mother, and the tension she endured from her older sister, Leah, caused Katie to seek solace once again in alcohol.

Maggie, who was a functional alcoholic in the sense that she could drink daily and still be able to go about her life, had already taken up drinking again. However, during Katie's latest episode, she had been abstaining from liquor; instead, she was taking a variety of painkillers for her aging body, of which at least some were likely to have been opium-based. At the time, these were cheaper than a bottle of gin, and more effective. These opium-laced drugs allowed her to have a high which her addiction so craved.

> By late May 1886—a little less than a year since her arrival in New York—Katy's life began to unravel. During the last weekend of that month, Sarah Taylor reported, Katy had taken her sons to New Jersey to visit English

> friends. Upon her return, she carefully avoided Sarah and when they finally met the following Tuesday, June 1, Katy seemed upset.
>
> By Wednesday, the mystery was sadly solved. That day, Sarah wrote in her diary that "the Doctor [her husband, George] came over to tell me that Katie was in a miserable saloon, drunk and [he] searched her out. ...It appears that these English friends had induced her to take wine at dinner and once she got the taste all the rest followed." (Stuart, 278-279)

Katie's drinking had gotten so out of control that it affected her relationship with Maggie, who was at that time medicating herself but not drinking. Although they eventually reconciled with one another, together they became very bitter toward those who they felt were responsible for the sorry states of their pathetic lives. Since Leah had written a memoir, *The Missing Link in Spiritualism*, portraying the movement (as well as herself) in favorable terms, so would Maggie write a memoir, exposing the movement and the Fox sisters' mediumship as a fraud and hoax. It seems that Katie was collaborating with Maggie initially, but withdrew from the book project and lecture circuit at some point before the book was actually published. Throughout this entire episode of declaring Spiritualism to be a fraud, interestingly, Katie continued actively with her mediumship.

Despair and desperate circumstances are what prompted Katie (and probably Maggie) to denounce the Spiritualist movement and mediumship, claiming it was a fraud and hoax. Katie was having such extreme financial difficulty at the time, which was exasperated by her drinking habit.

> While Katy initially participated in the events, her mental condition was so poor, according to an article in the *Rochester Democrat & Chronicle*, that she elicited more pity from her audiences than wonder. ...Even so, the reporter, who had managed to obtain an interview with the medium, concluded that "Kate Fox believed in Spiritualism and in her own powers as firmly as ever." Her appearance on the lecture circuit, he opined, was out of pure necessity for "she and her children wanted money, possibly bread, and that in her weakened condition of mind she had taken this way of getting those essentials." (Stuart, 302)

Although Katie publicly recanted her denial of Spiritualism and mediumship—as did Maggie—the damage was done. People looked at the two sisters askance and with suspicious eyes. Their erratic behavior and eccentricity caused the once adoring public to regard the sisters' claims merely as the ravings of a couple of drunks. The Spiritualist movement was faltering anyway, so most people had lost interest in following the antics of two matronly sisters who were actually quite pathetic and unreliable. Ironically, their damnation of the movement did not affect Spiritualism nearly as badly as it affected them personally.

Despite these facts they continued to give readings and séances until their deaths, but they never enjoyed the same prestige as they did in the early years. Sadly, instead of being able to retire financially well-off from a lifetime of work, and being revered due to their founding roles in the Spiritualist movement, they died poor and destitute from the ravages of severe alcoholism. Katie died on July 1, 1892. Less than a year later, on March 8, 1893, Maggie followed her.

Conclusion

The Fox sisters paid dearly for their gifts of mediumship. They experienced the extremes that celebrity and public life afforded to them—enjoying mass adoration from the power elite of the era to suffering from complete humiliation and ridicule from some of the same people who initially worshipped the ground upon which they walked. Of the three, however, Leah certainly had the more preferred life. Each time she married, she improved her social and financial condition, ultimately becoming a member of the elite society she served at the beginning of the Spiritualist movement.

Leah's motivation was self-serving. Initially, as a divorced and single mother, she needed to provide a home and food for her and her daughter, Lizzie. This innate desire—a mother's need to protect her offspring—cannot be viewed negatively; as a single mother in the mid-1800s, she had to do what was needed in order to survive and live. People wanted readings, and she needed to be paid for her time, hence exercising a basic axiom of economic-capitalism. Assuredly, Leah had no grandiose notions of pursuing mediumship as a way to assist other women in becoming more independent; this was an unexpected result of her efforts—making mediumship a legitimate career for women.

For all of her scheming and manipulating that was perpetrated for self-enrichment, she did, in the end, promulgate an occurrence (that could have easily been discounted as a fluke) into a veritable movement and religion. Her strong-headed attitude, and hard-nosed personality, was necessary in an age when women were expected to be seen but not heard. Leah was instrumental in making sure that mediumship was not only accepted by the public, but followed by the masses. Perhaps her ingenuity, coupled with happenstance and luck, provided the right combination to create an appealing movement that spread so rapidly among all classes of people.

Maggie never really was able to come to grips with her work and mediumship. On one hand, she enjoyed the life it provided for her, but on the other, she felt manipulated and used. She so desperately wanted a husband and family, but that was not to be. For a time, when Katie married and had children, Maggie lived vicariously through her younger sister as the doting auntie who spoiled her English nephews when she saw them. This was hardly a substitute, however, for her own desire to have a family to nurture and care for as a wife and mother. For all the grand experiences Maggie was afforded in the early years of her mediumship, she suffered dearly for her indulgences later in life. Anger and hatred were her driving forces as she aged, blaming her sister, Leah, for how her life ended up being so dismal. She turned to alcohol to escape the heartache she endured throughout her life, becoming so dependent upon liquor that it eventually consumed her.

No doubt, Leah felt she had done well by the girls, assisting her sisters in building careers in mediumship, managing and protecting them from the public and potentially unscrupulous suitors who might try to take advantage of them. She probably never consciously considered that any of her actions were damaging or hurtful. In her mind, she was looking out for the best interests of the family. As a result, though, she was able to parlay their mediumship into a financially viable career that allowed her the opportunity to raise her social status, whether it was through marriage or by self-preservation; her younger sisters never were able to enjoy the same type of financial freedom, always feeling Leah had somehow enriched herself at their expense.

Maggie's bitterness toward her sister, coupled with the premature loss of her beloved Elisha, set her on a path of self-destruction from which she never fully recovered. Melancholy episodes that we would call "depression" today followed her throughout her entire life. At times she seemed torn between practicing her mediumship and doing what she thought was right in the eyes of others. Perhaps she desperately was seeking the approval of others which made her want to serve the public. Maybe it was ego. The

adoring public who clamored to be in her presence gave her a feeling of importance and, oddly, made her feel loved. Regardless of her motivation, she had difficulty in dealing with her celebrity and in finding some type of happiness that gave her peace of mind.

Katie, perhaps, suffered the most of the three in that she would find fleeting happiness only to have it taken away from her. She was the most consistent medium of the three in that she gave readings throughout her entire life, even during the time she was married and had a family. Having started working as a medium when she was still a child, she was considered by many to have been the most gifted of the three sisters. Her naiveté and innocence in the early years helped convince many observers of the authenticity of her and her sisters' mediumship.

Were the original rappings an elaborate hoax by a couple of school girls playing a trick on their parents? True believers of the day said no: Those who experienced their gifted mediumship, received confirming messages from the other side, and witnessed the phenomena for themselves insist that the manifestations were authentic. It would be impossible, in their estimation, that two young girls could deceive millions, perpetrating the hoax for literally decades. Detractors maintain that Maggie and Katie's detailed admissions of fraud speak volumes and should be considered more decisively than their later recantations.

Certainly, the three sisters were taken from virtual obscurity and thrown into a whirlwind of celebrity that offered the sisters opportunities of which normal country girls could only dream. A disturbing side affect of their notoriety was the accessibility of alcohol which hosts eagerly plied them with regularly. Although Leah never indulged in drink, Maggie and Katie both developed a taste for champagne and brandy that ultimately led to their premature deaths, as indigent and destitute drunks unable to care for themselves.

Whether the Fox sisters liked it or not, they became the faces and torchbearers of the movement. It was through their voices that Spiritualism developed into a religion that is still practiced today. With the exception of Leah, these women did not necessarily want these ominous roles, but nonetheless were thrust into the public eye as sacrificial lambs going to slaughter. When times were good, Maggie and Katie flourished and relished the attention and accruements their celebrity afforded them; when times were bad, the two younger sisters spiraled out of control, causing them to turn to alcohol for temporary relief and a false sense of comfort. Regardless, they were women of substance that endured much over the course of their lives and have become influential voices of nineteenth-century Spiritualism.

Biographical Note

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Spiritual Prodigies, "Average" Ministers, and Late Bloomers: Ministry Student Ages of Conversion and Confirmation

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Abstract: In recent years, the age of conversion has decreased dramatically for most Christian faith traditions that practice believer's baptism. Several denominational leaders and researchers within these groups have warned about the negative effects related to these seemingly premature conversions. This paper draws on data from a national study of ministry students to analyze the ages of conversion or confirmation in relation to Christian vocational calling. The findings provide data on the percentages of those ministry students reporting early and late conversions/confirmations as well as those between the two extremes. While a relatively high percentage of ministry students report early conversion experiences, the presence of these "spiritual prodigies" within the ministry student population suggests that early conversions do not necessarily entail as many negative effects as originally feared. Nevertheless, some steps are advisable to establish more meaningful conversion experiences for the children being raised by devout Christian parents within those groups that practice believer's baptism. The final section of the paper offers some recommendations – in light of the findings – related to childhood evangelism practices.

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The Klan and Medieval/Renaissance Reenactors
Religion and Ritual in Two Alternate Cultures

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Abstract

The Klan and historical reenactors are paracultural groups with distinct occult elements. A paraculture exists both parallel and in tandem to everyday culture or mainstream society. Paracultural groups are tightly knit social networks whose members' hobbies and organizations saturate the daily lives and identities of individual participants. Public perception often falsely confuses these two paracultures. It is our goal in this paper to clarify similarities and differences by defining and describing each in terms of several fundamental sociocultural elements. Ethnographic and ethnohistorical data is used to explore cultural structures and their modal expression among members of the Klan and historical reenacting groups. We compare and contrast the following elements: 1) occult influences; 2) religious affiliations and structures; and 3) ritual forms and traditions. While both groups take social risks by participating in paracultures or alternate cultures, they are quite distinct and operate at opposite ends of the cultural spectrum.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to discuss why certain Ku Klux Klan groups and medieval and Renaissance reenactors can be defined as paracultures and why ritual is so important to group solidarity. We clarify differences and similarities between these groups by comparing descriptions of how they incorporate the following fundamental sociocultural elements into their specific group identities: 1) occult influences; 2) religious affiliations and structures; and 3) ritual forms and traditions. Data was gathered on Klan groups beginning in September 2006 and ending in May 2007. The research was funded by a grant from the Stephen F. Austin State University Office of Research and Sponsored programs. Research on reenacting groups was carried out September 1999 to December 2002 and November 2005 to February 2008 in Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, and Texas. Reenactor research from September 2007 to present is funded by a grant from Stephen F. Austin State University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

We begin by defining paraculture. We then discuss the Klan and medieval and Renaissance reenacting groups within the context of the paraculture concept. Next, we describe and compare the religious structures unique to the Klan and medieval and Renaissance reenactors followed by analysis of their rituals and traditions.

What is Paraculture?

Paracultures or alternate cultures are tightly knit social groups whose members participate in hobbies or organizations which saturate their daily lives, identities, and performed reality. Paracultures differ from typical microcultures or even subcultures in several ways. People participating in a paraculture maintain an actual alternate persona in the paraculture along with their mainstream identity. This alternate persona is used in the parallel reality shared by other members of their paracultural group. Both identities are maintained, and the individual transitions between the two parallel realities – mainstream cultural reality and the paracultural reality – by choosing which social identity to outwardly

display. By shared agreement on transitions to paracultural identities at gatherings, members create an alternate reality that exists parallel to "regular", "mundane," or "mainstream" public life. Because the alternate identity is carried within the self, members can move into the shared paracultural realm when they feel the need and have the opportunity (Chandler-Ezell 2003, 2007).

The Ku Klux Klan as a Paraculture

The Ku Klux Klan has been part of the American landscape since 1865 when the first Klan group formed in Pulaski, Tennessee. The brainchild or six ex-Confederate officers, the original Klan was shrouded in secrecy and has been said by some historians to have been nothing more than a way to circumvent boredom surrounding the end of the Civil War and the beginning of Reconstruction (Wade 1987). It was during this historical period that many of the rituals and traditions which still have meaning for modern Klansmen began. Among these rituals is the burning of the cross, donning of robes and hoods, and secret induction ceremonies of new members and officers. The Klan also has its own language, religion, and symbols. For reenacting groups, symbolism is also a very important part of their culture. While the Klan is steeped in southern culture and history, medieval and renaissance reenactors rely on medieval literature and music to define their identities. They also use costumes and role playing to mimic the social structures of knightly courts that enhance their group activities.

People who join contemporary Klan groups are cognizant of the past, especially the glory days of the original Klan and the Klan of the 1920s. They are also aware of negative aspects of the past surrounding the Klan such as lynching and harassment of blacks during Reconstruction and in the years prior to the civil rights movement. In some cases they are defensive about the myth surrounding the Klan of bygone eras and are quick to point out that the Klan has changed. Others hold onto the old myths and justify Klan activities of the past and present as essential to safeguarding the virtue of white women and protecting Southern heritage and culture. How has the Klan changed? For most Klan groups, the burning cross is still a powerful symbol of better times. Rather than burning crosses in public to intimidate "undesirable" groups, most modern day Klan groups hold rallies on private property. Rallies on private property enable organizers to keep certain rituals in line with the past. Some of these rituals include the preparation of the cross, donning of robes and hoods, induction of new members and officers, and strict adherence to whites only membership. They also practice endogamy and jealously guard certain secrets associated with "klancraft" or rights of membership.

Klan rallies offer a chance for likeminded white people to get together during the year, use racial epithets without reprisal, burn their crosses, and dress up in costumes representing the Klan of the past. Even though many active Klansmen and women work and interact with people of different ethnicities, they remain committed to segregation of the races (Dentice 2006). They endorse home schooling for white children and observances of Klan rallies revealed that close monitoring of television, movies, and music for their children is encouraged to prevent contact with diversity (Dentice 2007). Klan rallies and events are considered to be sacred events for modern day Klansmen and women. They closely identify with the idea of whiteness and racial purity and they have secret language and symbol base that creates a cohesive community that is off limits to other people. Their Web sites and literature reinforce a sense of community and culture linked to Klan history. Some Klan groups continue to resist efforts by progressives such as Thom Robb of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of Arkansas to stop wearing robes and hoods and cease with cross lighting ceremonies (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997).

Medieval/Renaissance Reenactors as a Paraculture

Historical reenactors attempt to relive and recreate characters, events, and social settings from a particular historical genre or time period. Reenactors differ from hired actors or even people who masquerade as a historical character for a party or job in that their goal is to personally experience the feeling of living in the time period/setting of their choice, usually in an alternate reality shared with other reenactors. The historically-accurate recreation of clothing, mannerisms, artifacts, and grooming by reenactors is a form of method acting designed to help the individual capture the feeling of actually living in the historical period. The specific artifacts and behaviors used as props as well as interaction with other reenators allow the reenactor to assume an alternate identity and participate in a shared alternate reality.

Medieval and Renaissance reenacting includes Renaissance Faires and groups such as the Society for Creative Anachronism (S.C.A.). The S.C.A. was founded in Berkeley, California in 1966 and is currently on every continent except Antarctica. It has an estimated 30,000 members and S.C.A. reenacting includes the period from ~400-1700 CE. (Society for Creative Anachronism 1993). Renaissance Faire reenactors participate in a variety of festivals throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia. Renaissance Faires imitate the style of the European Renaissance. They are focused on the Tudor-Elizabethan periods from the United Kingdom. Called Ren Faires, the events mix crafts, foods, dancing, music, and entertainment with a Renaissance or fantasy theme. The oldest Faires in the U.S. date back to 1963 when Phyllis Patterson and the Living History Center held the first festival in North Hollywood, California. Both S.C.A. and Ren Faire reenactors maintain active communities through local, national, and international organizations, events, websites, newsletters, virtual communities, and magazines.

Religious Structures

For the purposes of this discussion we define occult as relating to, or dealing with supernatural influences, agencies, or phenomena (Occult. (n.d.). *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*. Retrieved February 02, 2008, from Dictionary.com website: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Occult). In looking at the religious structures of the Klan there is some variation between groups. Not all groups adhere to Christian Identity ideology but the predominant view within the Klan of Christianity is a sort of inverted spirituality in which whites are considered to be the image of God and thus all whites are superior. Some Klan groups with younger members allow pagans to join (Dobratz 1995). Because more traditional Klansmen only recognize the Klan as a white Christian organization, the introduction of paganism has not been readily accepted. No matter how one identifies the religious orientation of the Klan, it has roots in ideas that are antithetical to traditional definitions of Christianity. Even though many Klansman do not recognize paganism as an acceptable substitute for religion, they often display Celtic symbols and refer to their Celtic ancestry.

For the reenacting groups discussed in this paper, neopaganism and agnosticism are key elements in their religious orientation. Identification with European – especially Celtic, Pictish, or Germanic—identities, are important ties to a shared European heritage. Medieval and Renaissance ritualism are key to the symbolism and practiced (both revived and invented) ritual expression of reenactors. It is interesting to note that while more traditional Klansmen are embracing their “white” European/Aryan heritage, they eschew anything having to do with paganism. By contrast Renaissance reenactors embrace it. Pagan myths are often clothed in poetic and sometimes esoteric language. Persona names and activities

are frequently drawn from pagan mythology. The symbolism medieval and Renaissance reenactors use to express their religious symbolism is overtly expressed in reenactor material culture with tattoos, jewelry (especially more esoteric forms of jewelry such as torcs, brooches, belts, circlets, and armbands), recreated garments, armor, weaponry, banners, glasses/goblets, silverware, and stationery. Neopaganism, agnosticism, and spiritual humanism are the dominant religious affiliations of renaissance reenactors. Even those who identify as Christians identify with the elements and symbols of medieval ritualism and an earth/goddess-friendly version of Christianity. "Godliness" in reenactor culture is more about chivalry, honor, and character than any overt religious activity or beliefs. Crosses are symbols or props used to capture a "period" feel and may be casually worn on close context with a variety of pagan religious symbols. For the Klan, the burning cross is the ultimate sacred object and represents for traditional Klansmen burning an object, the cross, rather than burning Jesus (Dentice 2007). Let us look at the different religious orientations in relation to the two paracultures.

Paganism

Paganism today is a broad term for "various religions, or spiritual movements, whose practitioners are inspired by the indigenous, pre-Christian, traditions of Europe, and engagement with other indigenous religious traditions, to evolve satisfying and respectful ways of celebrating human relationships with the wider, other-than-human world" (Clifton and Harvey2004). Classically, "pagan" was a Roman term which referred simply to "country dwellers" in Europe and the rest of the Roman Empire who followed local animistic, shamanistic, polytheistic, or non-Abrahamic indigenous religions. With the growth of the Christian church and the Christianization of most of Europe, pagan became the term for people who followed non-Abrahamic religions in Europe, similar to the Jewish use of "gentile" for non-Jews. Paganism today, more correctly called Neopaganism, is a set of revitalized religious and spiritual movements following revived animistic, shamanistic, polytheistic, or pan-theistic religions, predominantly of European origin. Neopaganism today is largely influenced by the Gaia movement, environmentalism, and feminism (Clifton and Harvey 2004, Stein and Stein 2008).

Paganism is thought to have originated during the Stone Age. Pagan religious vary from animistic nature-centered spiritualism to polytheistic but organized religions. Animistic, nature-centered spiritual beliefs often center on key environmental characters or forces such as economically important animals, plants, features (forests, lakes, caves, celestial bodies) or totem animals and plants (Tylor 1871, Frazer 1951). These purely animistic religions were believed to have arisen during the Stone Age or before, with shamans as the only practitioners. Over time, communal and ecclesiastical traditions with pantheons of anthropomorphic goddesses and gods arose. Classic texts from the Greek and Roman period described a range of shamanistic, communal, and ecclesiastical pagan religions in Europe (Clifton and Harvey 2004).

In America, the most popular pagan traditions derive from Celtic and Norse traditions such as Wicca, Druidism, and Asatru. Pagans do not adhere to one central religious text as do traditional Christians. Even though some pagans believe that Jesus is one of their gods, they do not worship him exclusively, and Satan, in particular, is not recognized as part of Wiccan cosmology. Paganism celebrates nature, all living creatures, and females are considered to be especially spiritual. Pagan themes vary and contain deities, witches, and ancient Egyptian symbols. Paganism refers to a range of spiritual paths. Wicca, Druidism, goddess worship, and neoshamanism are Earth-centered and emphasize harmony with nature. Other pagan factions such as Asatru and Hellenism are centered on deities. (Adler 1986, Luhrmann 1989, Greer 2003)

Agnosticism and atheism are also important elements found in reenacting venues. A definition of agnostic is a person who holds the view that any ultimate reality such as God is unknown and probably unknowable (http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01215c.htm, accessed February 2, 2008). For certain reenacting groups, agnosticism may assume either a religious or anti-religious form. Contemporary cultural reenactors are partners in a world view that accepts paranormal events and believes in fairies, witches, and ghosts. When coupling these beliefs with liberalism of religious dogma, the pivotal assumption of agnosticism is that a person can know the existence of something and still be totally unaware of its nature. The attitude of the believer is personal and focused on the object of belief whether it is a god or goddess or other religious symbol. Many of the agnostic reenactors behave in a pan-theistic way, utilizing element and symbols from a variety of religions in an equalizing, universalist manner. American based reenacting groups were founded by hippies and university scholars and students during the 1960s. The tradition of embracing non-mainstream ideas coupled with intense research into historic texts and customs continues.

There is a small pagan/neopagan movement within the Klan as well. These individuals take the Klan's emphasis on Aryan identity to its logical conclusion by joining in an Aryan revitalization movement. Instead of merging Aryan mythology and Germanic paganism into a revised, Aryan-supremacy revision of Christianity, these neopagans opt for a pure Aryan identity based on the occultic movements which arose in Germany and Austria in the early 1900s. That these movements culminated in the Nazi party's ideology is no coincidence. Many of the neopaganists in the Klan identify themselves as neo-Nazis and utilize Nazi symbolism and terminology.

The Christian Remnant

Almost diametrically opposed to the pagan/agnostic belief system of medieval and Renaissance reenactors is the pseudo-Christian religion of some contemporary Klan groups. Although not all Klan groups are Christian Identity, the belief systems converge and there are many similarities. According to Klan religious dogma, everything began to go downhill for whites in the Garden of Eden. The corruption of the earth takes only six chapters beginning in Genesis 1 and ending in Genesis 6. Sometime during this interlude, Eve allowed herself to be seduced by the serpent that was actually Satan. Eve's transgression brought about shame, sorrow, and alienation from God. The interpretation included in conservative racialist literature is that Eve was unfaithful to Adam and because of that they were both cast out of the garden.

The two-seed theory that originated with the American version of British-Israelism espouses that Eve was impregnated with two seeds. One seed was from the devil and the other from her husband, Adam. The devil's seed produced Cain and Adam's seed produced Abel. Cain is the symbol for evil and Abel for good. After Cain killed his brother, he was cursed by God and so were his ancestors. The unholy races that sprang directly from Cain include Asians, indigenous tribes, Arabs, Africans, and Jews (Ridgeway 1990). According to believers of this doctrine, the satanic seed line flourished in the Middle East and western Asia. By the time of Christ's birth, the seed line controlled the people of Jerusalem through the teachings of the Talmud.

Ritual Forms and Traditions in the Klan

Preparation of the cross is the focal point of many modern day Klan rallies. The night before each rally, timber is selected for use in the next evening's ceremony. Timber for the crosses is always recycled into firewood and is not used for another ceremony. After felling

the tree, men cut or chop away excess branches. After the men are satisfied with the size and texture of the timber they attach the cross with baling wire. Next the men wrap the entire cross with burlap and soak it with coal oil. The process begins early in the morning the day of the rally and usually lasts until just before sundown. After the cross has been sufficiently soaked, the men attach ropes to a four-wheel vehicle which hoists the cross(es) for the ceremony. Rally organizers attempt to keep the ritual as similar as possible to cross burnings of the past.

Before the cross burning, anyone who is going to participate in the ceremony dons the robe and hood. No one is allowed to participate in the ceremony without being clothed in full costume. Not all robes and hoods are white. Colors include red, black, blue, and green and many robes are satin. Participants are very careful not to let their robes touch the ground. Sashes and patches signify different rankings within the organization. The Imperial Wizard (the top ranking leader) always has the most patches and wears a sash. It usually takes about 30 minutes for everyone to be properly dressed in robes and hoods. A Klansman from Texas had the following to say about donning the robes:

> When we put on the robes and hoods it is really a magical thing. It takes you all the way back to the old glory days of the Klan. This ceremony is one of the best ways to keep the legacy of the Klan alive.

Before the ceremony begins, a high ranking Klansman (usually a Christian Identity minister) prepares the participants for the Circle of the Six Knights in honor of the original ex-Confederate soldiers who founded the Ku Klux Klan. Each person who participates in the cross burning is given a bamboo pole with the end wrapped in burlap and soaked in flammable liquid. Each person stands in line and has the pole lit by a Klansman wielding a large burning stick. After the bamboo poles are all lit, the participants end up in a large circle before the crosses. A prayer is said before and after the ceremony and the gospel song, 'The Old Rugged Cross' is played over the loud speakers. A script of the following passage is read or spoken from memory by the leader of the ceremony:

> As light drives away the darkness and gloom so as knowledge of the truth dispels ignorance and superstition. As fire purifies gold, silver, and precious stones, but destroys the dross, wood, hay, stubble, so by the fire of Calvary's cross we mean to purify and cleanse our virtues by burning out our vices by the fire of his word. Who can look upon the sublime symbol or sit in its sacred holy light without being inspired with a holy desire and determination to be a better man? By this sign we conquer.

After the passage is read, the group is directed to use their torches to light the cross or crosses if there is more than one. It generally takes from 15 to 20 minutes for the cross to engulf in flames. While the cross is burning, the participants toss their bamboo poles underneath the cross or crosses and then stand facing the crosses holding hands. If there are people who want to join the group, the Klansman in charge of the ceremony conducts the induction ceremony while the crosses are burning. After answering a series of questions, the oath of the Klan is administered. Visitors are not allowed to hear the oath. Each inductee raises his or her right hand and is welcomed into the 'citizenship' of the Ku Klux Klan. By that time the crosses have burned out and the rally is officially over.

Occultic Rituals and Symbolism in Reenactors

Reenactors in the S.C.A. engage in many personal and communal rituals. Individually, the ritual of creating and developing a persona that becomes their identity in the shared

paracultural reality of the S.C.A. contains many steps. Neophytes are allowed to "play" in a variety of personae before settling on their "real" one. This initial phase is encouraged as a childlike phase of experimentation in which the new reenactor can try on different identities to find the one most personally appealing. This is important, because the persona of the reenactor is an alternate identity which will become a permanent part of their reality – it will be who they are in the paracultural community. Most socialization within the group and in preparation for participating in group activities will be shaped by the persona. The new name and identity will be *his/her* name and identity. Many S.C.A. and Ren Faire reenactors do not even know the mundane (non-reenacting or real) name of their friends. They know them solely by their created personas.

The research to identify the time period that appeals and to generate one's new identity is an individual journey yet taken with much community support and feedback. Once an identity is chosen, the persona must be developed through generating a historically-accurate personal history, name, and appearance. The new persona's name must be approved and registered within the S.C.A. to ensure its historical appropriateness and uniqueness. The accompanying coat of arms must also be approved by the College of Heralds' for period and society-appropriateness. The new individual is formally named only at this point.

Individual rituals are enacted to enter character and assume the reenacting persona before reenacting activities. A mental shift must be made to "change gears" into the other. At first this often requires dressing in garb (period-appropriate clothing) and rehearsing the persona in one's mind. As the reenactor becomes more practiced, they can enjoy slipping into their personas whenever they feel the need for a little break from the mundane world. Some reenactors feel the need to be among other reenactors participating in the shared play to fully make the transition, while others find that music, handcrafts, or activities particular to the genre help them transition. The transition is outwardly marked by a change in speech pattern (using olde English, a lilting accent), mannerisms (courtly gestures, a tilt of the head, a noble posture), and, most obviously – changes in wardrobe and appearance.

Communal rituals are also important to the reenacting process. Individuals greet each other with polite, courtly speech, referring to each other as "milady", "milord", or the appropriate title. Formalized courtly speech is used in all communication – or at least speech appropriate to the persona and situation. The most obvious communal rituals are "court" sessions in the S.C.A. Members attend court, in which the group's leaders hold sway (court can occur at many levels – barony, kingdom, or even multi-kingdom gatherings). Court is held formally, with heralds acting as emcees ~~,~~ and gentlefolk making presentations or receiving honors from the rulers. Reenactors bow, curtsy, and speak in ritualized court mannerisms. Wars are large-scale events, often including representatives from multiple kingdoms. Warriors engage in ritualized battles, all strictly guided by explicit rules of conduct and ritualized forms of individual and group combat. Feasts are common to most events, with period-appropriate foods being prepared and served to all the guests on appropriate dinnerware. Entertainment and competitions displaying period-appropriate skills are used to gain status and add to the shared atmosphere. The doing, the shared play and ritual forms are the methods used by reenactors to create a shared atmosphere of play.

Discussion

Structure, history, and ritual are very important to the groups represented in this paper. For some contemporary Klan groups, the cross burning ceremony is a reminder of the past glory of earlier historical eras of the Klan. Medieval and Renaissance reenacting groups also pay homage to the past, reenacting social structures and courtly rituals of knightly days

of chivalry and romance. According to Valeri (1985), rituals are practices in which the participants do not believe themselves to necessarily be the sole authors of what they do. Instead their rituals come to them from a superior authority, and performing the ritual makes the individual both a part of the community and, for a time, the supernatural forces symbolized by the ritual. Since both the Klan and medieval and Renaissance reenactors share occult elements, it is reasonable to suggest that some higher metaphysical power drives them to continue traditions of a bygone era. Critics of the structuralist perspective believe rituals are assertions by actors that cannot be contested (Bloch 1987, 1989). Other scholars of ritual and power assert that rituals may be a force for change and not merely a conservative type of power (Tambiah 1985; Kertzer 1988). Victor Turner (1969) hypothesized that drama and ritual are about both order and change, and serve to stabilize the community by reinforcing social ties and affirming identity.

The ritual acts performed by reenactors and the Klan help define who the actors really are. For the Klan, the cross burning ceremony is not only historical but it is also linked with specific metaphysical religious elements. Medieval and Renaissance reenactors are obsessive about their costumes, music, and art. Details such as period-authentic laces, ties, toggles, and even fabric are used to create garments for men and women. Men and women often grow hairstyles peculiar to the time period they portray through their persona. They do this despite the fact that sporting extremely long hair (by modern standards), long beards, or uncommon types of moustaches and sideburns makes them very conspicuous and abnormal in appearance in mainstream society. There is special power in the ritual acts reenactors participate in, and it allows them to ~~actually~~ become kings, queens, knights, or ladies for a time in an alternate reality they share with other reenactors. For the Klan, the ritual act of burning the cross symbolizes a distinct brand of spirituality and harkens to a better day before feminism complicated gender relations and the civil rights movement forced equal status for blacks.

Rituals reproduce life and remake power interactions between the people who practice them. Paracultures enable actors to lead dual lives and retreat into fantasy while still retaining mainstream identities. For the groups analyzed in this paper, ritual defines who they are and authorizes their existence. Rituals are not secondary functions for the paracultures we have described. They are primary functions which legitimate cross burnings for Klan groups and sexual promiscuity for some reenactors. Foucault (1980) viewed ritual as something sinister and mystifying. The rituals we have examined in this paper are both. They are also empowering to a socially marginalized group such as the Klan and may serve as a vehicle for deconstruction of authority for people who prefer a parallel culture over mainstream culture.

Biographical Notes

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The Moral Majority and Evangelical/Fundamentalist Political Initiative

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Jimmy Carter was in the White House in January of 1980. Even though an evangelical identified with the Southern Baptist Convention was now in the presidential office, conservatives were not at all pleased with what he was doing. Carl F. H. Henry, a senior evangelical scholar, a Southern Baptist, and a former editor of Christianity Today, wrote about the rise of evangelicals to political influence and power, giving an analysis of evangelical political involvement. Jimmy Carter's election to the White House had been attributed to the evangelical block voting for him in the 1976 election. Henry wrote about the advances in evangelical political influence as being "more apparent than real," saying, "Admittedly, we have an evangelical in the White House—an evangelical with moral sensitivity, whose simple faith in the Bible sometimes motivates bold personal initiatives. But that devotion is not without a theological ambiguity that reflects the doctrinal imprecision found in many professedly evangelical churches where the end results are problematical. Nor is the presidency devoid of concern for personal image and political ambition. For all that, Carter has brought more spiritual lucidity to the White House than many of his predecessors, though his retinue leaves much to be desired."[1]

Henry proceeded to suggest that if evangelicals were going to have continued impact on society, and particularly the political process within that society, they must do some very specific things. First, he suggested that evangelicals "must place worldly culture on the defensive." He said that if the movement did not go on the offensive in this manner that it would "remain on the margin of national life and public conscience." Then he wrote that evangelicals should have "a well-formulated statement of evangelical goals in contemporary society, and an elaboration of strategy and tactics for moving beyond principles to policies and programs that enlist the movement's resources for specific objectives.[2]

As an evangelical theologian Carl Henry outlined some very destructive trends in American evangelicalism—the unsettled division within the Southern Baptist Convention, the struggle over the issue of authority, mass evangelism's waning state, the confusion over what is evangelical due to the charismatic domination of the mass media, secular education's growing power, the lack of a clear philosophy of social and political involvement, a leveling off of publications by evangelicals. Theologian Henry proceeded to recommend some corrective measures which he perceived as handling these destructive trends.[3]

What Carl Henry suggested Jerry Falwell and his companions sought to bring to pass in the creation of the Moral Majority and other political action groups. Henry, Billy Graham and other evangelicals recognized that to influence the future of the nation there had to be combined strength to bring pressure to bear on presidential, judicial, and

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[1] See Jimmy Carter, Why Not the Best? (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1975); Wesley G. Pippert, The Spiritual Journey of Jimmy Carter in His Own Words (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1978), particularly pp. xiii-xv; Frederick F. Siegel, Troubled Journey: From Pearl Harbor to Ronald Reagan (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), pp. 261-269; Carl F. H. Henry, "Evangelicals: Out of the Closet but Going Nowhere?" Christianity Today, Vol. 24 (January 4, 1980), p. 18.

[2] Henry, "Evangelicals: Out of the Closet but Going Nowhere?" Christianity Today, p. 18.

[3] Henry, "Evangelicals: Out of the Closet but Going Nowhere?" Christianity Today, pp. 18-19. See also Carl F. H. Henry, A Plea for Evangelical Demonstration (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1971) where Henry discusses the same issues related to the evangelical involvement in political and social issues.

legislative leadership, but they stopped short of using effective techniques and programs. The creation of the National Association of Evangelicals, the founding of Christianity Today and the cooperation of evangelicals in putting pressure on Congress and the White House became an important strategy. The creation of Moral Majority was an effort to put into place a vehicle through which pressure could be applied to both the White House and Congress on key issues. Where Carl Henry and Billy Graham did not succeed very well, Falwell and the founders of Moral Majority would go much farther in attempting to influence both legislation, as well as the executive branch of the government.

Conservative Christianity has rarely combined forces in such a way as to influence national politics or legislation.[4] The cooperative work of the Protestant denominations in temperance and prohibition of alcoholic beverages is an example of the power of such a combination of groups. The Anti-Saloon League and the churches formed a very influential and powerful group in the crusade to prohibit alcoholic beverages. The result was the passage of the 18th amendment and the inauguration of Prohibition.[5] For most conservative Christians in the late 19th century and the early part of the 20th century, prohibition of alcoholic beverages was a significant issue. This is apparent from the amount of time, effort and money spent in the crusade against liquor by various conservative Protestant groups.[6]

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[4] The issue is – how do you harness the vast power and influence of American religion? How does one do this without breaching the principle of separation of church and state? The variety of religious views, the diversity of the churches, and the other differences tend to divide and weaken, rather than bring together religious faiths. This has been the struggle which has characterized American evangelical Protestants, especially since the 1920s. All through American history there has been the recurring theme in evangelical thought that American society needed a moral regeneration. This was certainly true in the views of the Puritans who settled New England with their dream of establishing "a city set on a hill" to be an example of righteousness for the whole world to the modern TV evangelist who proclaims that we are in a great moral struggle for the soul of the nation. This theme has emerged at times in more pronounced ways than at others, but it continues to be significant--the religious fervor of a Jonathan Edwards, a Charles Finney, a D. L. Moody, a Billy Sunday, a Billy Graham, or a Jerry Falwell have a common thread—building a better moral life through emphasizing certain ideas and principles. A prominent example of the cooperation, mobilization and activist work of the churches is that of Prohibition. This movement, which is rooted in the early years of the nineteenth century, came to full fruitage in the passage of the eighteenth amendment. For more on this subject see Allen D. Hertzke, Representing God in Washington: The Role of Religious Lobbies in the American Polity (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1988), pp. 20-43.

[5] Norman H. Clark, Deliver Us From Evil: An Interpretation of American Prohibition (New York: Norton, 1976); Joseph R. Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1963); J. C. Burnham, "New Perspectives on the Prohibition 'Experiment' in the 1920's," Journal of Social History, 2 (1968), 51; Norman H. Clark, Dry Years: Prohibition in Washington (1965). Irving Fisher, Prohibition at Its Worst (New York: The Author Irving Fisher, 1927), 182.

[6] See the following for analysis of the involvement of churches and clergy in the development of the prohibition movement: Thomas H. Appleton, Jr., "Prohibition and Politics in Kentucky: The Gubernatorial Campaign and Election of 1915," The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society 75 (1977): 28-54; Gregory Vickers, "Southern Baptist Women and Social Concerns, 1910-1929," Baptist History and Heritage 23 (1988): 3-5; James H. Timberlake, Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900- 1912 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 4-8, 17-18; William G. McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham (New York: Ronald Press, 1959), 393, 397, 402, 411, 437; J. Larry Hood, "Marching to Zion: Christianity and Progressivism in Nelson and Washington Counties, Kentucky," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society 87 (1989): 144-161; Robert H. Wiebe, "The Progressive Years, 1900-1917," in William H. Cartwright and Richard L. Watson, Jr., editors, The Reinterpretation of American History and Culture (Washington, D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1973), 425-42.

The power of combined groups can be seen in the efforts to bring churches together in larger groups in order to influence legislative and governmental actions. The World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches both are examples of churches combining together to lobby national and international groups. In order to counter such movements there were efforts by more conservative Christian groups to combine their memberships. The National Association of Evangelicals was formed with just such a strategy in mind. Harold Ockenga, Billy Graham and other evangelical leaders recognized the importance of influencing national policies through lobbying the Congress and White House.

Fundamentalist groups such as those led by Carl McIntire, Bob Jones, Sr. and Billy James Hargis recognized this same principle.[7] Conservatives took knowledge of the actions of groups which they perceived to be liberal--the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, American Civil Liberties Union, World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches—and sought to bring pressure to bear on both the White House and Congress to further their cause. The problem was how to coordinate efforts and to make the best impression on both branches of government. In fact it was becoming increasingly evident that government was more and more antagonistic to the issues which most interested these conservative groups. There would remain the public image problem with which Sinclair Lewis had labeled fundamentalists in his novel Elmer Gantry. It was the image of senseless ranting, irrational preaching, money-hungry pan-handling and greed-bound clergymen whose primary interest was sensual and financial rather than spiritual and selfless.[8]

The Formation of the Moral Majority

Jerry Falwell and the other fundamentalists involved in the founding of Moral Majority were all too aware of the failure of Fundamentalism to make any kind of impact on the state or national political, governmental or moral situation. The "victory" of 1925 in the Scopes Trial would serve only to emphasize the failure of the fundamentalist wing of evangelical Protestantism to order the educational system to its liking. George M. Marsden has noted in his study of fundamentalism that the culture shifted to such an extent that the fundamentalists lost touch with the culture and failed to communicate with their society. By the end of the 1940s Carl F. H. Henry would make a clear assault on this failure in a short volume which marks the rise of a new social consciousness and a renewed determination on the part of conservative evangelicals to once again give direction to American culture and an effort to dissociate themselves from the Elmer Gantry image.[9]

Thomas H. Appleton's study, "'Like Banjo's Ghost': The Emergence of the Prohibition Issue in Kentucky Politics" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1981), while it focuses on the years 1906-1908, gives insight into the growing strength of the Prohibition movement in the commonwealth.

See also Jerry B. Hopkins, "Saved and Dry: The Prohibition Meetings of Mordecai F. Ham in Kentucky, 1908-1910," The Quarterly Review, Oct.-Dec., 1980, pp. 62-76; Mordecai F. Ham: Sensational Evangelism and Reform in Kentucky, 1914-15), M.A. Thesis, Eastern Kentucky University, 1969; "Evangelism, Prohibition, and Reform: Mordecai F. Ham and Prohibition in Kentucky," Filson Quarterly, (January, 1993), pp. 68-85.

[7] See Gary K. Clabaugh, Thunder on the Right: The Protestant Fundamentalists (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Company, 1974) discusses Carl McIntire and Billy James Hargis among others on the right-wing of American politics and religion.

[8] Sinclair Lewis, Elmer Gantry (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1927).

[9] Carl F. H. Henry, The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1947); George M. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 185, 188-189.

This determination can be noted in other actions also. The efforts to organize reveal that conservative evangelicals realized that there is power in numbers. Even as the more liberal elements, the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches, in American Protestantism joined in gaining control of mainline denominations, conservatives were joining together to assure their influence and power would be felt in Washington's power structures. Fundamentalists were organizing in the World Fundamentalist Association and other national groups. The National Association of Evangelicals in 1942 was an effort to disassociate conservative evangelicals from the radical Fundamentalists who were labeled as anti-intellectual and ignorant. It was an effort to build a new coalition of conservative evangelical religious groups for the purpose of reforming society from the top down. The NAE leadership would encourage contacts with the politically prominent. Billy Graham would become the friend of presidents, frequently consulted by them and associating with them.[10]

The NAE did not exert significant influence outside its annual meetings and allied groups. Its most prominent member, Evangelist Billy Graham, spoke on some issues, but would not take any radical stand that might endanger his broad base of support. Graham, Henry and several other leaders noted with some anxiety what they perceived as a leftward drift politically and religiously in the country. While the NAE addressed the organizational relationship, there was no vehicle for popular and scholarly expression to give some intellectual direction to the country. This led to the creation of the magazine Christianity Today in 1955. Graham, Harold Ockenga, Wilbur M. Smith and a wealthy layman from Ockenga's former church met in Boston to plan the new magazine.

Carl F. H. Henry was chosen as the first editor. Henry had some experience in journalism. He was a scholar, a philosopher and an ordained clergyman. Graham and Henry had met at Wheaton College and had continued a relationship which resulted in his appointment as editor of the new conservative journalistic voice.

In a "Confidential Summary" and other documents in the files from his editorship of Christianity Today Henry indicated that the purpose of the magazine and the reason it was housed in Washington, D. C., was to influence the selection of governmental leaders, to monitor issues important to the evangelical community and to publicize legislative and governmental issues about which evangelical should be concerned. While this was the stated purpose there was no other action (lobbying, voter registration, letter writing campaigns, etc.) taken to assure any influence or change in leadership or policy at the national level. This was a serious flaw in the new evangelical initiative to impact American politics and government. Much more was needed than just an editorial statement. In the 1960's Henry would conclude that they were unable to do what needed to be done to change the direction of American society.[11]

Billy Graham, Carl Henry and others had formed an impressive organization and conducted impressive public crusades in major cities, but these crusades did little to impact what they perceived to be the juggernaut of secular, humanistic and even anti-religious forces. Certainly there was some influence exerted by these efforts, but not the massive

[10] See the following biographies of Evangelist Billy Graham for more information on his involvement in social and political issues and with the presidents and political parties. John Pollock, Billy Graham: The Authorized Biography (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966) clearly details much of Graham's personal belief regarding major social and political issues during the forties and fifties. William Martin in his excellent biography of Graham details how Graham worked for Reagan in lobbying some senators on an issue of selling planes to Saudi Arabia, a move which Moral Majority and Jerry Falwell as supporters of Israel opposed. See William Martin, A Prophet With Honor: The Billy Graham Story (New York: William Morrow, 1991), p. 474.

[11] Christianity Today Papers, Collection 8, Box 1, Folder 37, Billy Graham Center Archives, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois.

change which most conservative religious leaders desired. These efforts had little impact in the halls of the United States Congress and very little in the operation of the presidential office, even though Graham and his group were often in touch with whoever might be the president at the time.

What Billy Graham, Carl Henry and their impressive allies were unable to accomplish, Jerry Falwell and his allies hoped to achieve. Falwell and others working with him were able to bring together on an impressive scale different groups, even different religious groups, to wield in political campaigns and legislative initiatives a more potent threat to the political left. They termed their efforts "The Moral Majority." Who were these people? What did they believe? What brought them together, and what were they able to accomplish?

Key Individuals and Groups

A cluster of ultra-conservative groups emerged to represent what some have termed "the Christian right," or the "new Christian right" in the nation's capitol. Christian Voice, Religious Roundtable, Focus on the Family, Concerned Women of America, Pat Robertson's Freedom Council, American Coalition for Traditional Values, National Christian Action Coalition, Intercessors for America, anti-abortion groups such as the Right to Life and the Moral Majority were part of this cluster. Jerry Falwell was a key figure in the emergence of the New Christian Right in America. He was the driving leadership behind the development and promotion of the Moral Majority as a political tool in the 1980s. Falwell, along with Pat Robertson, Patrick Buchanan and Cal Thomas were part of a movement to revitalize conservative political and religious power-structures in the United States during the 1980s.[12]

The fear of most liberal politicians and intellectuals was that Falwell would accomplish what he wanted. In their image of American fundamentalist clergy they saw in him the character of Sinclair Lewis' Elmer Gantry. Lewis described his loathsome character with these words, "He would combine in one association all the moral organizations of America— perhaps later, the entire world. He would be the executive of the combination; he would be the super-president of the United States, and some day the dictator of the world."[13] While there is a difference of opinion among students of the new religious right as to the effectiveness of the "group power" of religious movements such as the Moral Majority and related groups, it is apparent that researchers have concluded that they were effective in some of their efforts. Researcher Matthew Moen concluded that organizations such as Moral Majority were very successful. He wrote, "The reality was that the Christian Right was quite successful on the Hill during the first Reagan term." In most cases the success was not in areas of highest priority and there was a sharp decline after the initial successes. Scholars James L. Guth and John C. Green as a result of their research indicated that the Moral Majority was not a large number of people. Thus they named their article "The Moralizing Minority: Christian Right Support Among Political Contributors." They concluded that Moral Majority, as with other Christian Right movements there were shared liabilities--"a very narrow public base and limited support within the conservative religious community." In this assessment the authors relied on a 1986 Wall Street Journal article by David Shribman

[12] Jeffery K. Hadden & Anson Shupe, Televangelism: Power and Politics on God's Frontier (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1988), p. viii; Allen D. Hertzsche, Representing God in Washington: The Roles of Religious Lobbies in the American Polity (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1938), p. 33; see also Clyde Wilcox, "Evangelicals and the Moral Majority," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1989, Vol. 28, pp. 400-414.

[13] Lewis, Elmer Gantry, p. 329.

entitled "Michigan Results Expose Weakness of Robertson."[14]

Key Concerns and Issues

Moral Majority tapped a national network of fundamentalists and evangelicals united around a core of key issues. These issues on which "the new right" focused were abortion, ERA, pornography, moral permissiveness, family and the freedom of religious expression (prayer and Bible reading in public schools).[15]

Several highly visible television evangelists allied themselves with Falwell in the formation of this movement to "recover" America – James Robison, Jimmy Swaggart and Pat Robertson. This movement certainly influenced the realignment of political parties, just as the antislavery movement did in the early nineteenth century with the Abolitionists.[16]

Initially Moral Majority was built around the twin poles of traditional values and cultural conservatism resulting in "tremendous support." Then Falwell shifted to the broader issue of foreign policy, focusing specifically on support for Israel. One scholarly observer of Falwell and the Moral Majority suggests that "the effort to recast the Moral Majority into the Liberty Foundation was undertaken not so much in response to a constituency as in an attempt to create a new one."[17]

Moral Majority got involved in some specific issues. One of the volatile issues for evangelicals was abortion. John Warwick Montgomery, a lawyer-theologian in California and director of studies for the International Institute of Human Rights, Strasbourg, France, said, "A little child—unable to save himself and fully dependent—is, like the Jewish people, one of those 'weak things of this world' chosen by God to 'confound the wise.' Those who harm them do so at their peril, both in time and in eternity."[18] Abortion was one of the issues

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[14] Robert Zwier, "The Power and Potential of Religious Interest Groups," Journal of Church and State, Vol. 33 (Spring 1991), p. 273; James L. Guth and John C. Green, "The Moralizing Minority: Christian Right Support Among Political Contributors," Social Science Quarterly, (September 1987), pp. 598, 608. See also Matthew C. Moen, The Christian Right and Congress (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1989), 141.

[15] Jerome L. Himmelstein, "The New Right," in Robert C. Liebman and Robert Wuthnow, eds., The New Christian Right (New York: Aldine, 1983), pp. 13-30.

[16] Louis Filler, The Crusade Against Slavery, 1830-1860 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1960) discusses the organization of Christians into anti-slavery groups to work for the freeing of the slaves. Abolitionism joined other movements such as temperance in urging people to act in concert to achieve their objectives. For a detailed discussion of this in Filler check pages 66-81. Ronald g. Walters, The Antislavery Appeal: American Abolitionism After 1830 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978) discusses the interplay of religion and morals in the formation of abolitionist groups in the period 1830-1860. He stressed in his study, "William Lloyd Garrison and the twentieth-century freedom rider each focused his moral perceptions upon the evil of racism, but how each saw it and how each responded to it differed. The millennialistic, deeply Protestant religious seeking of Garrison, his excitement at the advent of progress, his belief that civilization required the utmost measure of control--these all belong to his day and mark the distance between Garrison's activism and that of our times. Yet these also mark some of the many things abolitionists shared with their contemporaries." (p. 146)

See Timothy L. Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform In Mid-Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Abingdon, 1967).

[17] Hertzke, p. 152.

[18] John Warwick Montgomery, "Abortion: Courting Severe Judgment," Christianity Today, v. 24 (January 25, 1980), p. 56. (The actual article is pages 54, 56.) In this article Montgomery likens the abortion issue to the situation during Hitler's "Thousand Year Reich" suggesting that "collapsed into a seething inferno in a single generation largely because the Fuhrer and his cohorts attempted to exterminate the apple of God's eye—the people he chose as the vehicles of human salvation." (p. 54)

which Ronald Reagan took a strong public stand against during both his campaigns. In doing so he drew the support of conservative groups such as Moral Majority and the other movements on the Religious Right.

In May of 1980 the Moral Majority joined with Religious Roundtable, Christian Voice, Campus Crusade and the National Association of Evangelicals to support voluntary public school prayer. They sought the additional signature of 218 congressmen on a petition that would discharge Senate Bill 450 from the House Judiciary Committee which it was being held up. The bill was offered by Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) and would bar federal courts from ruling on school prayer disputes. It was announced that a new supporter of the prayer bill was William Murray, the son of the atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair who initiated the original court action leading to the banning of prayer in the public schools.[19]

Moral Majority utilized a Political Action Committee (PAC) in 1980 modeled after the secular New Right PACs. It would give birth to another PAC in 1984 called "I Love America." These new PACs would raise large amounts of money using direct mail, contributing only a small portion of those receipts to candidates. Clyde Wilcox in his article on the New Christian Right PACs indicated that these groups "engaged in independent expenditures and used in-kind contributions, practices frequently used by secular New Right PACs." Wilcox's analysis of these groups led him to conclude, "While claiming the moral authority of religious bodies (most have the words "religious" or "Christian" in their names), they are explicitly political organizations which contribute primarily to Republican candidates." The aim of Moral Majority's PACs was to influence the outcome of senatorial and representative elections leading to the defeat of those they considered liberal and the election of candidates more in agreement with the conservative agenda.[20]

A large number of conservative groups, the Moral Majority included, worked for the re-election of President Ronald Reagan in 1984. Intentionally Reagan's campaign strategists presented him as the "pro-moral" choice. Repeatedly he publicly affirmed his support for traditional family values, school prayer, and his opposition to abortion, homosexual right and pornography. Reagan's winning the presidential office over Democrat Walter Mondale was termed as a "landslide victory." In his article on moral conservatism and the presidential campaign of 1984, Eric Woodrum concluded that, even though there were these statements and obvious positions by Candidate Ronald Reagan and his re-election strategists, there was "no reason to conclude that moral conservatism was decisive in Reagan's 1984 landslide victory."[21]

In the 1988 presidential campaign the issue of religion, prayer and the public schools surfaced again. Presidential candidate Pat Robertson particularly focused on "the public schools as 'so failed' as to have become the center of serious crime so widespread that the 'public school is the most dangerous place to be ... outside the mother's womb.'" He charged that the leadership of public schools intentionally was contrary to "the Judeo-Christian tradition." Robertson, like Falwell, argued "that the 'tiny elite' of 'secular humanists'" had taken "the government, the courts, and the public schools from America's God-fearing majority, and it is now up to Christians to win them back."[22]

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[19] Christianity Today, Vol. 24 (June 27, 1980), p. 787 (61).

[20] Clyde Wilcox, "Political Action Committees of the New Christian Right: A Longitudinal Analysis," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1988, Vol. 27, p. 63, 69.

[21] Eric Woodrum, "Moral Conservatism and the 1984 Presidential Election," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1988, Vol. 27, pp. 192-210. See also Richard V. Pierard, "Religion and the 1984 Election Campaign," Review of Religious Research, Vol. 27 (December 1985), pp. 98-114; John H. Simpson, "Socio-Moral Issues and Recent Presidential Elections," Review of Religious Research, Vol. 27 (December 1985), pp. 115-123; Stephen D. Johnson and Joseph B. Tamney, "The Christian Right and the 1984 Presidential Election," Review of Religious Research, Vol. 27 (December 1985), pp. 124-133.

[22] James E. Wood, Jr., "Editorial: The Battle Over the Public School," Journal of Church and State, 28

The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 had given a strong message on some of these conservative issues. The Reagan presidency had a goal to overturn, or nullify, the Supreme Court's decisions on prayer in public schools and abortion. The Secretary of Education William J. Bennett said, "Four decades of misguided court decisions ... have thrust religion and the things touched by religion out of public schools."[23] Reagan in his presidential campaigns and during his presidency often reaffirmed his promise "to put God back into the public schools."[24]

Nature and Scope of the Organization

Jerry Falwell and the others who assisted in the formation of the Moral Majority hoped that it would have significant influence on the shaping of national, state and local politics and governmental decisions. The aim of the organization was to so influence the politicians that they would begin to respond more favorably to conservative and fundamentalist concerns about the state of society and government.

The Moral Majority came into existence primarily as a result of the initiative of Jerry Falwell and a group of concerned conservative leaders. In his book Listen America Falwell describes what was the origin of the organization, downplaying the political aspect of the group in favor of a more spiritual explanation. He was flying home to Lynchburg when he felt the Lord calling him to get all "the good people of America" together to rise up against the rising tide of moral decay endangering the nation.[25]

Hertzke acknowledged that the Moral Majority was a formidable movement. It maintained a large direct-mail list, utilized advanced technologies very effectively—phone banks, computer generated phone messages to targeted constituencies, special telecommunication experiments such as a conference call between 150,000 pastors and President Reagan in his 1984 presidential campaign. At the peak of its work the Moral Majority could make 100,000 phone calls per week. These tapes were customized along the lines of TV evangelists Falwell, Swaggart or Robertson. Falwell reported in the spring of 1986 that only one million members had responded to an appeal to join the Liberty Foundation, the restructuring of the Moral Majority.[26] Observers of the organization acknowledge that it was well-equipped to do two things: (1) "to reach millions of aroused constituents through direct mail and electronic media," (2) "survey evidence of broad American public support for organized prayer in the public schools, with only Jewish respondents clearly opposed."[27]

The membership of the Moral Majority was carefully structured. The leadership aimed toward organizing by state and even moving closer to the grassroots by striving to bring together like-minded individuals in a given area and organize them into pressure groups. Hertzke wrote, "The membership is broken down into congressional districts, issue concerns, and religious backgrounds, to enable the organization to focus its mailings, this reduces costs. Tracking these lists also enables the leaders to discern which issues are "hot buttons for fundraising purposes." Although Falwell stressed that the Moral Majority (or

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(Winter 1986), p. 7.

[23] Ibid., p. 6.

[24] Ibid., pp. 6-7. See also Clyde Wilcox, "Popular Support for the Moral Majority in 1980: A Second Look," Social Science Quarterly, Vol. 68, (1987), pp. 157-167.

[25] Gillian Peele, Revival and Reaction: The Right in Contemporary America (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 113; Jerry Falwell, Listen America (New York, 1981), p. 6.

[26] Allen D. Hertzke, Representing God in Washington: The Role of Religious Lobbies in the American Polity (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1988), p. 33.

[27] Hertzke, p. 165.

Liberty Foundation, as it later became) was open to all who agreed with its conservative views, most of the membership came from independent, fundamentalist Baptist churches in the South.[28]

The Moral Majority's intention was to move the country back to a more conservative position on the key issues. The leaders focused on these issues and sought to influence those who agreed with them to contact and put pressure on their congressmen and senators. There were efforts to bring influence to bear on the presidential office to make decisions more favorable to the causes which Moral Majority and other conservative groups desired. The strategy was to marshall grassroots support and bring this influence to bear on both the White House and the Congress to move the country toward a more conservative position.

The Successes and Failures

In 1980 Moral Majority and the New Christian Right flexed its muscle by vigorously working for the election of Ronald Reagan, by intervening in some electoral races and by taking some credit for defeating such well-known liberal senators as George McGovern, Gaylord Nelson, Birch Bayh and Frank Church.[29] A shift was occurring in American politics which would impact the national political scene, particularly that of the White House and Capitol Hill. As conservatives began to build networks and to mobilize their following it became apparent that some vehicle was needed to bring together different groups and movements within the conservative sphere to create greater impact and influence in Congress and the presidential office.

Several conservative interest groups emerged as movements dedicated to fostering change through presidential action, legislative mandate or court decisions. The Moral Majority built on this resurgence of conservative and right wing movements. As has been observed, the Moral Majority had some influence and power, but it was not able to achieve its full agenda or make significant impact on either the presidential decision-making process or the legislative process. The abortion situation was not reversed. Some support was given to Israel. A report on pornography was generated and distributed and a new initiative by the Justice Department attacking what conservatives saw as the menace of pornography, particularly child pornography.

In 1989 Jerry Falwell declared that "The Moral Majority" had won in the cultural war. He announced that it was being disbanded because it had achieved its purpose and was no longer needed. Richard J. Neuhaus, project director of the council on Religion and International Affairs in New York City and the editor of Lutheran Forum, in 1982 evaluated Moral Majority in an article in Christianity Today, describing it as a fundamentalist attempt to direct the shaping of America. In his evaluation Neuhaus stated, "If our only choice is between the militant fundamentalism of Moral Majority and the militant secularism of the American Civil Liberties Union, the outlook is not encouraging." Neuhaus did acknowledge that the "New Religious Right" was "a long-term phenomenon in American life." He confessed that they needed to be included in the "redefining" of America. Whoever could "communicate the better dream for America" would be the one to control the process and the shaping of the new America.[30]

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[28] Hertzke, pp. 50, 96.

[29] Gillian Peele, Revival and Reaction: The Right in Contemporary America (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 7.

[30] Richard J. Neuhaus, "Who, Now, Will Shape the Meaning of America?" Christianity Today, 26 (March

Unwittingly, Jerry Falwell and the other Moral Majoritarians had fit the description of Sinclair Lewis in Elmer Gantry. Lewis had written, "And the head of this united organization would be the Warwick of America, the man behind the throne, the man who would send for presidents, of whatever party, and give orders ... and that man, perhaps the most powerful man since the beginning of history, was going to be Elmer Gantry. Not even Napoleon or Alexander had been able to dictate what a whole nation could wear and eat and say and think. That, Elmer Gantry was about to do."[31] This was exactly what the critics and opponents of the Moral Majority thought Falwell and his co-workers were attempting to do.

Conclusion

The Moral Majority was one of the most serious attempts on the part of conservative religious and political groups to unite to accomplish their aim to control the political and governmental processes of the country. The success of the coalition which brought about the Prohibition Amendment in 1919 and the other attempts by evangelicals to form coalitions illustrate the potential in bringing together the "grassroots" of American political and religious conservatives. It is the purpose of this study to add to the knowledge of the historical roots, the objectives and the potential of the fundamentalist-evangelical alliance which molded the Moral Majority into whatever political tool it was.

While Moral Majority was not able to achieve many of the goals which it set out to achieve, it did bring conservatives and fundamentalists into active participation in the political and governmental processes. It was an attempt to utilize the grassroots support of fundamentalist and conservative churches in a coalition to influence legislators to vote positively on conservative issues, the executive branch to use it considerable power to support conservative causes and to give input into the judicial decisions through the process of submitting briefs to the Supreme Court and lower federal courts.

Considerable anxiety was aroused among liberals regarding the potential power of Moral Majority. There was some anxiety that there really was a large number of people supporting Jerry Falwell and the Moral Majority. A renewed threat came from Moral Majority founder Jerry Falwell in an address to a group of Florida Baptist pastors in November of 1993. He cited President Clinton's views on abortion and homosexuality as the reason he might revive the Moral Majority and "declare war" on the president's administration.[32] The whole idea of a vehicle through which conservative religious groups could put pressure on the political and legislative processes is still an important part of the resurgence of the New Christian Right.

Moral Majority presents a good example of the determination of evangelical and fundamentalist initiative to influence, if not control, presidential policy-making and legislative decisions. The New Christian Right was coming of age and gaining a new expertise in lobbying and influencing political leaders to support the measures which were favored by them. The hope of this conservative resurgence was to slow, if not reverse, the changes coming to American society and government. In some ways the Reagan and Bush years reveal some of the initiatives of this energetic group. Moral Majority certainly got the attention of the national media and the national political leadership.

In many ways this period of American history and political action is similar to that

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19, 1982), p. 17, 19.

[31]Lewis, Elmer Gantry, p. 394.

[32]Lindsay Bergstrom, "Falwell Threatens to 'Declare War' With Clinton Over Abortion, Gays," Florida Baptist Witness, Volume 109, (November 19, 1992), p. 10.

period just prior to the Civil War. Evangelical Protestantism was very much alive and anxious about the future of the nation during both periods. As Timothy Smith wrote of that earlier period, "Exuberant churchmen rededicated themselves to the dream of making America a Christian nation."[33] The announced intention of the leaders of Moral Majority was to turn the nation back to what they perceived to be its spiritual roots. Their initiative was a serious one intended to create a nation more like what they desired--"a Christian nation." Or, as Sinclair Lewis had his fictional preacher pray, "Dear Lord, thy work is but begun! We shall yet make these United States a moral nation!"[34]

Biographical Note

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[33]Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century, p. 15.

[34] Lewis, Elmer Gantry, p. 416.