Giuseppe Giordan
William H. Swatos, Jr. *Editors*

Religion, Spirituality and Everyday Practice

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About the Editors

Giuseppe Giordan is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Padua. From 2007 he has served as Secretary of the Sociology of Religion Section of the Italian Sociological Association, and from 2009 as General Secretary of the International Society for the Sociology of Religion (ISSR/SISR). With Enzo Pace and Luigi Berzano he also edits the *Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion*. He completed all his social science degrees at the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas (the Angelicum) in Rome, receiving his doctorate *summa cum laude* in 2010. He also holds a bachelor's degree in theology from the Theological Faculty of Northern Italy. His books in English include *Identity and Pluralism: The Values of the Post-Modern Time* (2004) and the edited volumes *Vocation and Social Context* (2007), *Conversion in the Age of Pluralism* (2009) and *Youth and Religion* (2010), in addition to articles in *Implicit Religion, Social Compass*, and the *Review of Religious Research*.

William H. Swatos, Jr. received his doctorate with examination honors in social theory from the University of Kentucky. He has served for over a decade as Executive Officer of both the Association for the Sociology of Religion and the Religious Research Association. He is a Senior Fellow of the Institute for Studies of Religion at Baylor University, editing the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion,* and teaches in the sociology faculty at Augustana College (Illinois). He is also Canon Theologian of the Anglican Diocese of Quincy, Illinois. With Kevin Christiano and Peter Kivisto, he is co-author of the text *Sociology of Religion*, currently in its second edition. In addition, he is co-author of a text in Social Problems as well as *For Democracy: The Noble Character and Tragic Flaws of the Middle Class* (with Peter Kivisto and Ronald Glassman) and *Icelandic Spiritualism: Mediumship and Modernity* (with Loftur R. Gissurarson), as well as fourteen edited volumes, including the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society*. In 2004 he assumed the general editorship of the "Religion and the Social Order" series sponsored by the ASR, with a total of ten volumes completing publication between then and 2011.

Introduction

The Spiritual "Turn" in Religion as Process and Outcome

William H. Swatos, Jr. and Giuseppe Giordan

It has become almost a mantra in the discussion of religion among young adults in the West to hear words to the effect, "Well, I'm spiritual, I think, not religious" – or the converse, "Well, no, I'm not religious, but I think of myself as a spiritual person." Young adults of the current generation have indeed shown a marked tendency toward a preference for describing themselves as "spiritual" as contrasted to "religious." This book began its history, appropriately for the topic, at a conference in Assisi. European and American scholars in the sociology of religion sought to examine the possible meanings and consequences associated with this contrast in terms of the similarities and differences that affect those who use these terms with respect to the everyday practices that they themselves employ or they believe should be manifest in the lives of others as a result of a self-definition as "religious" or "spiritual" – or not.

These chapters take up the religious-spiritual contrast specifically through investigations into *practice*: In what ways do people who claim to be "religious" or "spiritual" define these self-images as manifest in their own lives? How do people who make this contrast believe people who see themselves in these ways implement their convictions in practice (or should implement them)? We also explore whether there are institutions of spiritual practice to which those who term themselves "spiritual" turn or whether the difference implied by these terms may instead be between institutionalized and de-institutionalized expressions of practice, including but not limited to self-spiritualities. How on a daily basis does a person who considers himself or herself "religious" or "spiritual" live out that self-image in specific ways that she or he can describe to others, even if not share with others? Are there ways that being "spiritual" can involve religion or ways that being "religious" can involve spirituality, and if so, how do these differ from concepts in prior eras?

The term "spirituality" is not by any means new to the world of religion. All of the major world religious traditions, in their different languages, speak of spirituality. In the Roman Catholic tradition, for example, it has been common to speak for hundreds of years in such terms as Franciscan spirituality, Jesuit spirituality, Dominican spirituality. In these contexts, however, spirituality was also closely connected to particular "disciplines" – that is, the "spiritual life" was characterized by

systems of rules that the intended practitioner followed in an attempt to achieve spiritual depth and, ideally, perfection. These various disciplines were closely associated with religious orders – monks, nuns, sisters, brothers, and so on. The word "piety" may in another era have actually been closer to the current use of "spirituality," as people talked also of these different styles of spirituality as having distinct pieties and could also speak of a piety apart from a specific order, as for example "a strong Marian piety," meaning simply an intense religious consciousness of or devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, in Christianity, but also Franciscan piety, Jesuit piety, and so on would be used. Nor were these limited to Roman Catholics. Among Protestants persons might be noted for a Wesleyan spirituality or piety, for example, and particularly successful preachers might engender similar devotion – Haugean piety among Norwegians – and some denominations became specifically known as "pietistic." In its English-language use the term "spirituality" has on occasion been confused with spiritual*ism,* the practice of attempting to achieve contact with the "spirits" of deceased persons. While this is a generally aberrant use of the term, nevertheless it is the case that some of the most devoted spiritualists have developed a spirituality of spiritualism – in which, in effect, contact with "the other side" becomes the core of a person's religious self-image.

The authors of the chapters in this volume address the religion/spirituality problematic from a variety of perspectives. What they share in common is that expressions of encounters with the supernoumenos increasingly divide between structures that are essentially external to the participant actor and those that are essentially internal.

Ideas and Concepts of the Spiritual Turn

This venture begins with an analysis by Linda Woodhead, Professor of Sociology of Religion at England's Lancaster University, of the five main aspects of the on-going relationships between spiritualities and religions: (1) early spirituality as a radicalization and "Easternization" of liberal Christianity, (2) ritual, esotericism and nativism in Christianity and spirituality, (3) New Age and its parallels with charismatic-evangelical Christianity, (4) the holistic turn in spirituality and its links to "lived" religion in the West; (5) contemporary neo-Paganism and its links with Christian tradition, ritual, and place. She observes on the one hand the interactions between what could be called by traditional categories "the religious" and "the spiritual," but also pays particular attention to aspects of power relations between the two, not least those that relate to gender.

Enzo Pace, Professor of Sociology at the University of Padua and Past President of the International Society for the Sociology of Religion, continues to examine these dynamics by noting that historically religions have always been preeminently contexts for the assertion of *system* power, whereas spiritualities focus on the empowerment of *actors* – spiritualities are constructed by participant actors rather than engaged as external systems for the allocation of divine favor or power. Thus

spirituality is not a residual category when religion fails to hold its power base among a population, but an autonomous category for the construction of meaning and value outside the societal power structure.

Bill Swatos's discussion of pilgrimage in Chapter three looks at both the historical and contemporary dimensions of "going on a pilgrimage" *vs.* "pilgrimage spirituality." On the one hand, pilgrimage is a long-standing practice in virtually all religions. Historically, however, pilgrimages have also in each of those religions been relatively highly structured practices – and in some still are, at least for some people. Pilgrimages were rule-bound and were undertaken within a context of institutionalized structures of travel. Pilgrims not only went someplace to feel or see something, but they did so in a prescribed way that was verified by authorities within the religious system. Contemporary pilgrimage spirituality, on the other hand, is more individuated and seeks authenticity in the experience of the individual pilgrim – hence a potential conflict arises as people get to the "same" place but find that not every way of "getting there" or "being there" is equally recognized by authority. This sets up a potential conflict between completing an authorized [situationally objective] pilgrimage and an authentic [situationally subjective] pilgrimage, though it does not necessarily have to be so.

Mary Jo Neitz, Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies at the University of Missouri, focuses on the concept of "lived religion" – a potential vehicle for transcending the division between the institutionalized facticity implied by grounding religious research too strongly in official definitions and codes, while ignoring participant actors as part of religions as living structures. Historically, for example, much social scientific study of religion took the norms articulated by religious bodies as "the" religion, rather than looking at how religious people actually lived their lives both in respect to specific religious duties and beliefs but also in respect to an articulation between these and other aspects of their lives. By looking at religion as a set of institutionalized norms and officially sanctioned practitioners and practices, sociology can actually serve the reverse purpose of its intent: that is, it can avoid actually describing what religious people do as religious people while instead investigating what religious people don't do over against formal norms articulated (largely in print media) by religious bodies as corporate structures and not necessarily engaged in some details even by the corporate actors themselves, though these same corporate actors might affirm them as details that ought to be observed, both by themselves and others.

Luigi Berzano, Professor of Sociology at the University of Torino, extends this discussion by choosing a concept of impeccable sociological heritage – *lifestyle* – and looking at it in terms of religion: religious lifestyles. A religious lifestyle is, in effect, a quasi-formulated set of "ways of going about living" that a person develops across the adult life-course. Religious lifestyles are how people work out a combination of personal, familial, social, and similar relationships in regard to belonging, consumption, style, or persona more or less in a public or private way, but without obligation; that is, the privatization of religious life such that within wide bounds the religious life is capable of being socially ignored yet personally meaningful, with or without perceivable consequences beyond the individual.

Case Studies in the New Spirituality

In Chapter Six, Giuseppe Giordan looks at the shifts in prayer patters between generations of individuals in a primarily Catholic cultural setting. What he finds is that people of the younger generation (25–40 year olds) generally continue to pray, whether or not they attend church, but that they pray differently – specifically, that traditional rote styles of prayer are either entirely abandoned on the one hand for free prayer, or are used, but because of the putative "meaning" they have to the person praying, rather than because they are authorized or mandated by the institutional church.

But what about the parish churches themselves? In the following chapter, Patricia Wittberg, Professor of Sociology at Indiana University/Purdue University Indianapolis and past editor of the *Review of Religious Research*, analyzes data from a series of surveys of over 800 parishes conducted over a 10-year period by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University. She finds a curious outcome: the larger the parish the more likely parishioners were to evaluate the community and hospitality favorably, but parishes with little member turnover and more stability were less likely to evaluate community and hospitality as favorably. Members in the larger parishes, however, were also less likely actually to be involved in community-building and outreach activities. Wittberg thus raises questions about what this holds for the future of the American Catholic parish when almost three-fourths of American Catholics do not attend Mass (hence are not included in the surveys at all) and how to weigh the satisfaction of the quarter who do attend over against the larger body of non-attendees.

In their contribution, Christopher Bader of Chapman University and Ashley Palmer of Baylor University look at the relationship between concepts of God and how active persons are in churches today. They posit that more exclusivist concepts of God will engender greater participation in church/religious life with respect to both private and public life. That is, people who see God as potentially excluding persons from eternal rewards who do not meet specific standards in this life will also cause these people to observe religious teachings in practices in both public and private circumstances.

In Chapter Nine, Andrea Molle, a Post-doctoral scholar at Chapman University, changes our focus from a concentration on the traditions of Europe and Anglo-America to Japan, where religion is conceived differently from the West in many ways – even though economically Japan stands with the West. His major emphasis is to examine practice at the individual level rather than to focus on historic institutionalized macro-traditions. He offers a variety of examples to substantiate the argument that scholars should study Japanese religion neither in historically framed contexts nor in a context of globalized "spirituality," but rather as a uniquely Japanese comprehensive spiritual attitude as it is actually lived and experienced in Japanese peoples' everyday lives.

In the following chapter, Cathy Holtmann, a graduate student at the University of New Brunswick, Canada, looks at social activism among Roman Catholic women

as a form of spirituality. Whereas there have always been some Catholic religious orders that have stressed activism within their rules of life, historically lay spiritualities have been preeminently devotional, at least until the rise of the Catholic Worker movement. The women in Holtmann's sample, however, are primarily post-Vatican II Catholics, who are used to greater democratization within the life of the church – including spirituality. For some of these women, social action, particularly in terms of social change, has led to contradictions between their spirituality and Catholic social teachings. Some of the women in Holtmann's sample show that spirituality does not always turn inward, hence that it is wrong to assume that everyone who speaks of himself or herself as "spiritual, not religious" is necessarily avoiding engagement with the larger world in spiritual terms. At least some of the women Holtmann has interviewed consider engagement with the world to be a direct result of their spirituality.

It is likely the case that most residents of North America tend to think of our nations as ethnic melting pots, while we think of the nations of Europe as much less so – or at most so only those who had extensive colonies still in the twentieth century. In his chapter, Davide Girardi, a recent Ph.D. recipient from the University of Padua, gives us a picture of an increasingly changed Europe as he considers the "short youth" of Romanian and Moroccan immigrants to Europe today. This matter is made the more curious by the fact that Italians have surveyed their own youth in a variety of ways. Girardi examines how the youth of these groups relate to both their host societies and the religio-spiritual traditions of their ancestors as they try to find a place for themselves, while at the same time being more quickly pressed into adult roles than their Italian counterparts.

The two final chapters deal with Roman Catholicism. In the first, Anthony Blasi, Professor of Sociology at Tennessee State University and a past president of the Association for the Sociology of Religion, discusses a series of areas where social science research relates to Catholic doctrine: family issues, not least divorce and same-sex unions; the nature of work, including the nature of self-actualization; economic life, including both the dignity of the individual and the common good; political community, justice, and education; Church teaching, including such themes as peace, regard for one's neighbor, and simplicity in living. The final chapter, by Isacco Turina, researcher in sociology at the University of Bologna, offers a cautious reaction to the limits of the "spiritual turn" in religion, at least as far as the Roman Catholic Church is concerned. Particularly in Italy he notes an increasing distance between the hierarchy and the faithful, but reminds us that there, at least, power remains with the hierarchy. Hence, individual believers may move in multiple directions within and without the church, while the hierarchy basically controls the organization *qua* organization. The hierarchy rules with or without the consent of the governed, with or without the spirituality it would most like to engender. Thus while there may well develop a lay spirituality that is more "open to the world" and tolerant of other creeds or lifestyles, neither the laity engaged in these spiritual movements nor social scientists studying them should assume that some type of "bottom up" change in ecclesiastical structures and policies will necessarily be entailed.

Part I
Ideas and Concepts of the Spiritual Turn

Chapter 1
Spirituality and Christianity: The Unfolding of a Tangled Relationship

Linda Woodhead

Spirituality and Christianity are often regarded as distinct, even opposed, traditions with separate trajectories of development. This chapter suggests the opposite: that spirituality is better understood through its close and constitutive relation with Christianity, a relationship that extends from its origins in the nineteenth century through to the present day. The aim of what follows is to identify and analyze the main phases to date in this on-going relationship.

There are many reasons why the entanglement of spirituality and Christianity is often overlooked. Each "camp" has good reasons for trying to distance itself from its rival and overlook what links them. There is the sheer difficulty of teasing apart the tangled interrelations over a century and a half, but there is also the complication that both spirituality and Christianity are currently internally diverse, the diversity of the former increasing dramatically in the period under review. In order to build up a reliable picture of the unfolding relationship between spirituality and Christianity, it is therefore necessary to take a long historical view, and to consider the many strands of the two religions: not only beliefs but also organizational forms and power-relations; ethics, values and prescribed lifestyles; ritual and collective practices and symbols; emotional and aesthetic dimensions.

The time is ripe for attempting such a task because a number of recent publications have helped sketch in some key pieces of the picture. In relation to the Anglophone world (the main focus here), one is Leigh Schmidt's *Restless Souls* (2005), which tells the story of the development of spirituality in the United States, and highlights its close connections with liberal Christianity. I have developed a compatible argument in a study of the close linkages between reforming liberal – especially Unitarian – Christianity and the alternative spirituality that came to the West "from the East" at the end of the turn of the nineteenth century, pointing out the importance of the colonial context (Woodhead 2001). Ronald Hutton's work on

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the origins of paganism (1999) has contributed by laying to rest theories about the ancient, pre-Christian origins of spirituality, while highlighting Renaissance and later influences, a theme also developed by Wouter Hanegraaff (1998). Alex Owen (1989, 2004) has illuminated the sources and context of nineteenth-century spiritualism and occultism, exploring some of their linkages with Christianity, and Joanne Pearson (2007) has traced the close connections between paganism, particularly Wicca, and nativist movements in English, British and "Celtic" Christianity. Jone Salomonsen (2001) offers a close "theological" analysis of the similarities and differences between the Starhawk-inspired "Reclaiming" community and Christian belief. Giselle Vincett (2009) has researched recent entanglements and "fusing" between Christianity and feminist spirituality, and Katherine Rountree (2004) has investigated mutual constructions and repudiations between contemporary goddess pagans and Christians.

Building on such work, and on historical and empirical research on Christianity and spirituality in which I have been directly involved, this chapter offers an analysis of the main steps and stages in the unfolding history of their entanglement.[1] It is intended as a sketch of how a much more comprehensive work could be structured: a helicopter view of the main features in a landscape of encounter rather than a detailed cartography.

It is important to say clearly at the outset that there is no intention to deny the separate identities of Christianity and spirituality, or to collapse one into the other. No sides are taken, and there is no claim made about their relative value. The assumption that *does* underlie the whole enterprise, however, is that their separate identities are – like all identities – formed in, by and through relationship. In the case of spirituality and Christianity, this relationship has been one of boundary-drawing and mutual repudiation, as well as borrowing, influence and overlap. It is argued not only that spirituality has a constitutive relationship with Christianity in its origins, but that in the course of their separate development each has always also kept an eye on the other, hence that they have a special relation with one another in the religious field, even when they are most opposed. As we all know, sworn enemies – and ex-partners – can be just as profoundly interrelated as bosom pals.

Early Spirituality as a Radicalization and "Easternization" of Liberal Christianity

Spirituality first emerges as a significant religious force and a self-conscious identity in the West in the mid-nineteenth century. Schmidt (2005) highlights how it grew from roots in liberal Christianity, and Woodhead (2001) argues that it can be

[1] Research in Kendal, UK (2000–2002) carried out as part of a team comprising Paul Heelas (PI), Ben Seel, Bronislaw Szerszynski and Karin Tusting, supported by the Leverhulme Trust; and research in Asheville, North Carolina (2006) carried out in collaboration with Helen Berger, and supported by a British Academy grant.

understood as a radicalization or "reform" of the liberal tradition. Like the Protestant Reformation, many of its pioneers were people who had attempted to reform their churches from within, but whose frustrated efforts led them to conclude that change could be better effected by leaving altogether in order to establish new, "purer" forms of religious commitment. Thus early spirituality echoes the schismatic logic of Protestant Christianity, but goes farther than Protestants were prepared to go, both doctrinally and organizationally. With regard to the former, for example, many proponents of spirituality rejected anthropocentric and Trinitarian doctrines of God in favor of a more radically unitarian conception, and rejected doctrines of hell, damnation and human sinfulness.[2] With regard to the latter, more democratic and participatory structures tended to be favored, most of which gave more scope for leadership by charismatic "lay" men and, more unusually, women.

There is an additional element in the story of early spirituality's emergence that Schwartz, because of his focus on the United States, says less about – the colonial. It is no coincidence that spirituality emerges in an era of empires, when western colonialism is a major political force, and when western powers are actively engaged in reshaping the geopolitical landscape to bring more territories and peoples under western, particularly European, control. The most powerful and extensive of these Empires, the British, also plays the largest role in the early history of spirituality. One of its effects, from the eighteenth century onward, had been to bring into existence a highly-educated, partly-Westernized, culturally bi-lingual, English-speaking, "native" cultural elite, particularly in India (though some of whom were educated in Britain). Another related effect was to introduce Western "modernizing" ideas, whose impetus extended to the field of religion. Encounter with Christian missionaries, with their critiques and denunciations of the backward and benighted "idolatrous" religions they encountered, also acted as a stimulus for indigenous elites to defend or seek to reform their existing religious cultures. Ironically, this task of religio-cultural reform was often stimulated, informed and enabled by the work of the Western "Orientalist" scholars who came on the coat-tails of Empire, but were active in recovering and celebrating the texts and "Ur" cultures of the ancient "East" (Kopf 1969). The influence of other, sometimes counter-cultural, Westerners who showed an interest in the defense of ancient cultures and the riches they could offer also played a part (see, for example, Lago 1972).

The result was that reforming, modernizing ideas, including those of liberal Christianity, particularly Unitarianism, influenced some educated Indians to call for an internal reform of their own religious traditions. Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu "reformers" sought a "rational" reformation of their own traditions that would excise the "idolatrous" aspects and leave a pure, rational, ethical, monotheistic core. Some took traditionalist, semi-populist, conservative forms – like the Arya Samaj of

[2] A significant number did indeed have a Unitarian background, but rejected Unitarian*ism* in order to pursue a more thoroughgoing unitarian understanding of the divine that gave no special place to Christ (or viewed Christ as a cosmic principle in which we all participate), and moved in a more monist or idealist direction. Thus "God" becomes "the divine" or "spirit."

Dayananda Saraswati in 1875 (a direct ancestor of some fundamentalist movements today), while others took more liberal forms, like the Brahmo Samaj which was inspired by Rammohun Roy and Dwarkanath Tagore, and in which Debendranath Tagore invested energy from the 1830s (Kopf 1979). By the later nineteenth century this early "rationalist" phase of modernizing reform was supplemented by a more "Romantic" and philosophically idealist one (a development that is clear in the history of the Brahmo Samaj). This shift had western influences, but was also bound up with a revival of interest in the Advaitic (non-dualist) monistic tradition within Hinduism itself. The result was a turn toward an even more radically "Unitarian" commitment: to belief in a single, ineffable divine "Unity" identified as the essence of all true religion. This "One" was said to lie beyond all names and forms, all words and symbols, all differences and distinctions of race and religion. As such, it could serve as the perfect unifying point of all the world's religions – a perennial tradition that promised a new era of religious harmony for the whole world.

When this partly western-inspired form of spirituality was presented by a succession of "holy men," "monks" and swamis to the West as "ancient wisdom from the East," it won an enthusiastic following – often of women. The period between 1890 and 1914 was one of particularly intense activity. An adventitious showcasing event was rather accidentally provided by the World's Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in 1893 as part of the World's Columbian Exposition (Seager 1993). Its liberal Christian, Unitarian and Quaker organizers had planned to bring liberal religious traditions from around the world together, in order to demonstrate that they all had in common a belief in a single Father God and the "brotherhood of man" (Barrows 1893). In practice, it was the more radical speakers like Swami Vivekananda from India (influenced by the Brahmo Samaj but going beyond it), the Buddhist monk Dharmapala, and some spokespersons of the new Theosophical movement like Annie Besant (1914), who benefited most and gained the most lasting celebrity.

Vivekananda's speech at the World's Parliament gives a good idea of some key themes of this early version of this form of spirituality – a formless mysticism. At its heart is a vision of the divine who is "everywhere the pure and formless one" (Vivekananda 1893: 972). Rather than being mediated by a particular priesthood, scripture, ritual, or organization, this god is said to be accessible to all men and women. (The latter are explicitly addressed by Vivekananda.) All religions point to the one divine essence, but "the East" has the task of re-presenting the eternal message to a West that is sunk in scientific materialism on the one hand, and Christian dogmatism on the other:

> Every other religion lays down a certain amount of fixed dogma, and tries to force the whole society through it… To the Hindu, the whole world of religion is only a travelling, a coming up, of different men and women, though various conditions and circumstances, to the same goal. Every religion is only an evolving of a god out of the material man; and the same god is the inspiration of them all… It is the same light coming through different colours (Vivekananda 1893: 976–77).

Thus the divine is in us, around us and part of us. The divine is our natural heritage and completion, to which Asian wisdom recalls us. Christianity is gravely at fault in calling men and women "sinners," says Vivekananda: "it is a sin to call them so."

The radical political implication was clear: the rule of white races and the "men" who claim to be guardians and arbiters of eternal truth must end. The time is ripe to recover a genuine priesthood, and colonized peoples may save those who conquer them.

Christian reaction to this message, and to this early form of spirituality, was varied. Only followers of the most radical forms of Protestantism were open to it. More mainstream liberals, including many of the organizers of the World's Parliament were ambivalent or critical. Speakers like Vivekananda were skilful at demonstrating how much they shared with their liberal Christian brethren, but the differences were also obvious. Some more conservative Christians, both Protestant and Catholic, were fiercely hostile. One of the most outspoken was the popular writer and theologian, the English lay Catholic G. K. Chesterton, who chose Annie Besant as the target of some of his most forceful critiques, and her brand of spirituality became, for him, the mirror image of Christian "Orthodoxy." As he puts it in his eponymous volume:

> By insisting especially on the immanence of God we get introspection, self-isolation, quietism, social indifference – Tibet. By insisting on the transcendence of God we get wonder, curiosity, moral and political adventure, righteous indignation – Christendom. Insisting that God is inside man, man is always inside himself. By insisting that God transcends man, man has transcended himself (1908/1961: 133).

During the course of the twentieth century, however, many of the ideas of formless mysticism were absorbed into – or independently echoed by – some strands of Christianity. Around the turn of the century there was a revival of interest in monastic spirituality and in mysticism in many Christian circles, including Roman Catholic and Anglican ones (for example, Dean Inge's *Christian Mysticism* of 1899). A few decades later some liberal Christians – like Bultmann in Germany and his popularizer John Robinson in Britain – were presenting accounts of God as "ultimate concern" and "depth of our being" which had more in common with formless mysticism than Trinitarian orthodoxy – though they were heavily criticized by some Christians, and were later eclipsed in academic theology by much more conservative "neo-orthodox" views.

Magic and the "Esoteric" Tradition

The emergence of spirituality out of liberal Christian, Romantic, and Asian religious influences is only a part of the story of its origins and early development. Another, earlier, stream of influence is to be found in "esotericism" – in "occult" and "magical" traditions that date from the Renaissance. Though western esotericism has links to more ancient sources, including the classical tradition and Kabalistic Judaism, it is largely a Christian tradition, albeit one that became increasingly marginalized within Christianity from the early modern period onward. Indeed, the very category of "magic" is a product of an early modern development whereby various influences, including combinations of Reformation Protestantism, Counter-Reformation Catholicism, scientific rationalism and an evolutionary

schema came to separate out and denigrate many embodied, practical, non-clerical, forms of religious practice as "superstitious" and "primitive" (Berman 1981).

The forms of magical and occult practice that flowed into modern spirituality were often revived by cultural elites, including Freemasons and classical scholars. Some were practicing Christians, most often belonging to ritualized forms of Christianity, including Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and "high" Anglicanism. Others repudiated Christianity altogether. Although esotericism is not really a tradition so much as a collection of fragments with varied historical and contextual origins, in the nineteenth century a number of remarkable individuals were able to pull together elements of this collection into coherent and compelling packages, and to lend them intellectual coherence and institutional embodiment. Some, like "Madame" Helena Blavatsky, the founder of Theosophy, distanced themselves from Christianity, and appealed to a "timeless" tradition that was communicated to her by mysterious adepts dwelling on remote Himalayan mountain tops. Others, like Anna Kingsford and some of the Masonic founders of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, probably the most influential of all the nineteenth occult societies, remained committed to Christianity, while seeking to revivify it by recovering its neglected mystical and magical elements (Owen 2004).

Like formless mysticism, this esoteric variant of early spirituality proved attractive to some members of the educated classes who were dissatisfied with both the contemporary churches on the one hand, and science and "materialism" on the other. It provided an attractive alternative for women and men who wished to pursue an intellectually vigorous and religiously exciting path in relation to which they could be active explorers, participants and teachers. Many forms of esotericism were tightly organized, highly ritualized, and hierarchical; but both women and men could rise to the highest levels by virtue of ritual and spiritual prowess. The rewards, in terms of powerful and direct "occult" experience, intense fellowship, spiritual satisfaction, and authority and influence could be great.

Partly because of its close-knit institutional forms and its openness to charismatic authority, occultism was fissiparous, and it gave rise to numerous different groups and movements with complex webs of interconnection. Some of the gifted individuals it inspired used its magical ingredients to forge new forms. A number, most notoriously Aleister Crowley, took a path which set them on a collision course with Christianity, practicing "dark arts" and reveling in a "diabolical" and highly sexualized ritual magic that was in many ways a direct inversion of puritanical Christianity and an attempt to embrace all that it most feared and forbade. Others remained attached to mainstream Christianity, or at least understood themselves to be restoring lost forms of Christian wisdom and practice. There were also linkages and cross-overs with "liberal" spirituality. Annie Besant, for example, was an ex-Anglican who became an atheist before converting to Theosophy and moving to India where she campaigned for and "anointed" Krishnamurti, who in turn rejected ritualism and occultism in favor of a stripped-down version of formless mysticism (Nethercot 1961, 1963). By contrast, Besant's contemporary, Evelyn Underhill, was a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, but wrote the best-selling *Mysticism* (1911), which was as widely and appreciatively read by Christians as by others. It remains hard to place Underhill in one camp or the other.

One of the most lastingly successful, but also most apparently non-Christian, later twentieth-century variants of esoteric spirituality is Wicca (witchcraft, or simply "the craft"), which developed under the organizing genius of Gerald Gardner in England in the 1940s. Drawing on a mix of sources, including the anthropologist and folklorist Margaret Murray's work on witches, and on some of Crowley's rituals, Gardner presented Wicca as an ancient pre-Christian religion, persecuted by the church but kept alive in secret by small groups of women across Europe and American organized into "covens." Gardner wrote, he said, in order to keep this priceless religious tradition alive, but in "recording" its rituals, practices and forms he was also creating a new, feminized form of spirituality for the late modern world (Adler 1986). Wicca has flourished in the intervening years and developed into various forms, including "goddess spirituality," partly under the influence of second- and third-wave feminism – much influenced by the writing and rituals of Starhawk (1999), and more magical and popular forms. There are now solitary witches ("hedge witches"), teen witches, Gardnerian witches, as well as many others who retain the coven as the basic organizational unit (Berger et al. 2003).

With its female as well as – or, in some versions, instead of – male god(s), its largely egalitarian structure, and its sense of persecution at Christian hands, Wicca might seem at first sight to be a form of spirituality that really has very little to do with Christianity. As Pearson (2007) has demonstrated, however, even Wicca has a Christian as well as non-Christian heritage. Gardner, for example, was once an ordained priest, as were several others of those attracted to early Wicca. More important, Wicca is part and parcel of a nativist English religious tendency that can be traced back as far as the late medieval and early Reformation period, and finds expression in many different dreams and realities of a "national" English Church (both Catholic and Protestant), and inspired many *episcopi vagantes* (wandering bishops) – clerics who claimed to belong to various "true" Catholic and Anglican churches that maintained ancient traditions polluted by the mainstream churches. Pearson shows how entangled several of these strands are in Wicca's history and development, and points out how it carried on the dream of an ancient, indigenous religion native to England's "green and pleasant land" (as that other Christian-magical-esoteric-Romantic Englishman, the artist and poet William Blake, put it). With its emphasis on ritual, magic and a more open approach to the body and sexuality, Wicca can be interpreted both as a reaction to contemporary forms of Protestantism and as a longing to return to a pre-disenchanted form of magical, sacramental and highly ritualized religion that has some obvious similarities with pre-modern, pre-Tridentine Catholicism.

The New Age and Charismatic-Evangelical Christianity

Despite their different profiles, both of the early forms of spirituality discussed so far – formless mysticism and occult spirituality – proved attractive to members of highly educated cultural elites, female and male. They involved intense and complex metaphysical and cosmological speculation, analysis of ancient texts, and

acquaintance with classical sources and non-western cultures and languages. As Owen (2004) points out, part of their attraction for women was precisely that they provided scope for learning and teaching at a time when higher education was largely closed to them. In different ways, the books of Blavatsky and Underhill still impress with the sheer breadth of their learning, as well as their creative and literary skill. Like Christianity at the same time, spirituality was articulated in weighty theological tomes that, though they offered very different interpretations of "god, man and the universe," nevertheless shared a genre.

By the time we get to the 1970s and the emergence of what came to be called the "New Age movement," however, things are beginning to change both in spirituality and in Christianity. The dominance of theology, of doctrine, of intellectual speculation, and of leadership by educated elites, start to be seriously challenged by grassroots movements with a more practical and experiential emphasis. In Christianity we see this in the "charismatic revival" that had such a decisive impact on later twentieth century Protestantism and, to lesser extent, Catholicism. Allied with evangelicalism, the charismatic movement came to represent a serious challenge to more doctrinally-oriented and clerically-dominated forms of Christianity. Now ordinary Christians could read and interpret the Bible for themselves and, above all, experience the Holy Spirit directly in ways that touched the heart in powerful and life-transforming ways. Such life-transforming experience, along with personal study of "the Word," came to be considered more important than theological profundity, participation in "empty" rituals, and immersion in tradition.

Something similar happened in spirituality. Although elements of both formless mysticism and occultism fed directly into New Age, the latter is distinguished by a much more practical and experiential – rather than speculative and ritual – emphasis.[3] As with charismatic religion, what matters most is what works and what is *experienced* as true and life-changing. Similarly, what is valued is not immersion in a tradition and a community that is larger and more important than the individual, but discovery of one's own true "purpose," meaning and identity. Thus Rick Warren (2002), the best-selling American Christian author, tells readers how to realize the unique plans that God has for them and to live "a purpose-driven life," just as a plethora of New Age techniques reveal how to discover the "true Self" and the "god within" (Heelas 1996). Furthermore, both place a strong emphasis on the immediate and practical benefits of spiritual endeavor. Both believe in supernaturally-ordained personal destiny, in the work of supernatural powers (like angels) that guide and protect the individual, and in efficacious spiritual practices that bring people into contact with a superhuman energy that is inspiring, energizing, healing, and transforming. No mediation is necessary: such power can be tapped directly by each and every individual, and is his or her birthright. All that is needed is instruction and facilitation to help individuals get in touch with the divine. Both also share a heady optimism: individual life can be perfected (in relation to the divine), "God

[3] Some interpretations of New Age see it as growing out of esoteric spirituality (e.g. Hanegraaff 1998), others out of formless mysticism (Heelas 1996). My suggestion is that both are influential resources on which New Age, and its many variants draw.

has a plan for the universe" (evangelical), "the universe is moving toward a new age of universal enlightenment" (New Age), and – despite birth-pangs in the meantime – in the end "all will be well."

Despite the many similarities between New Age spirituality and Charismatic-Evangelical Christianity, however, there are also important differences. So important, indeed, that despite their contemporaneity, these religious trajectories maintain clear boundaries, and regard one another with deep suspicion and mistrust. When we undertook research on religion and spirituality in the English town of Kendal in 2000–2002, for example, we found that of all the kinds of Christians, it was charismatic-evangelicals who were *least* likely to have any contact with alternative spirituality – as well as *vice versa*. Even taking part in activities like Yoga for purely physical reasons, was regarded with some suspicion by many evangelicals, and in the most charismatic of the churches a full 60% of respondents agreed with the most negative statement offered in a survey of their attitudes to spirituality: that "alternative or complementary non-church forms of spirituality are unacceptable for Christians."[4] This is not to deny that some ex-evangelicals are eventually attracted to spirituality, but this seems to involve a lengthy process of de-conversion from the former and gradual incorporation into the latter, very different from being simultaneously immersed in both.

One of the most important things that separates New Age from charismatic-evangelical Christianity is their very different organizational forms and power relations. Although the latter gives much greater scope for lay participation and leadership than many older forms of Christianity, it is strongly masculine-dominated and tends to have clear practical as well as theological blocks to women exercising institutional leadership and authority over men. (That is not to say that women are not able to achieve considerable autonomy and power, but this is largely confined to all-women groups and settings – see Brasher 1998, Griffith 1997.) Moreover, evangelicalism tends to be organized in such a way that there is informal disciplining (often called "shepherding" or "discipling") of members. This is closely bound up with a tight moral and behavioral code that places particular emphasis on certain patterns of personal sexual conduct, dress and presentation, and exalts the status of heterosexual marriage, the nuclear family and male headship of households. All this is in strong contrast to the much looser and more egalitarian organizational forms of New Age, which usually grant individual participants the right to enter and leave when they please, and which foreswear attempts to "impose" external standards of conduct and behavior upon "members." Moreover, New Age has some clear alliances with the 'sixties counter-culture and with sexual libertarianism, feminism and a generally libertarian ethos. Such differences are immediately apparent in the different styles of dress, deportment and domestic decoration, as well as in the differing emotional programs and regimes characteristic of the two (Riis and Woodhead 2010).

In accounting for the similarities between New Age spirituality and charismatic-evangelical Christianity then, it is more plausible to point to shared contexts and

[4] Data available at http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/projects/ieppp/kendal/.

influences as much as, or more than, direct influence and borrowing. Steven Tipton (1982), for example, interprets a charismatic Christian group and a New Age EST (Erhard Seminars Training) group as different social arenas by means of which young people got "saved from the 'sixties" and its counter-cultural confusions, and discovered more viable moral and social frameworks within which to live meaningful lives as they matured. We can add to this account of shared context, that both New Age and charismatic-evangelicalism are highly adaptive to late capitalism: they directly skill and support their adherents in negotiating new patterns and demands of a workplace that increasingly demands self-reliance, independence and flexibility. Not only do they offer practices of self-hood and individualization, they also provide therapeutic support and remedies of various kinds to deal with the stresses and strains of modern working life, its demands and disappointments (Woodhead 2008). Moreover, they mesh with a consumerist ethos for which the everyday practice of choice and reflexivity is unavoidable (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002), and the demand for a maximization of subjectively meaningful and pleasing experiences is normalized.

Above all, perhaps, both charismatic-evangelicalism and New Age chime with the ethos of competitive individualism, which turns life into a competition in which those who can access the most energy, power, creativity, and "soul-force" can hope to be "winners" with commensurate worldly recognition and reward. By finding one's true purpose, clearing away blockages to energetic functioning, therapeutically dealing with problems and hindrances along the way, finding support from appropriate networks, forging a strong sense of individual identity, self-worth and entitlement, and getting into contact with supernatural sources of power, both movements promise to help make individuals "the best you can be." Although cultural commentators have tended to see these traits much more clearly in New Age and alternative spirituality – for example in the famous denunciation of the "expressive individualism" of "Sheila" in Bellah et al.'s *Habits of the Heart* (1985), it is interesting to note that in more recent essays Bellah (2006) acknowledges his mistake in not seeing that evangelical Christianity would be an equally, if not more, important social carrier of individualism in late-modern America.

"Mind, Body, Spirit" and Popular Religion in the West

In the USA the spirituality section of many bookshops and libraries was, and sometimes still is, labeled "Metaphysical." In the UK, such sections are more likely to labeled "Mind, Body, Spirit." The latter more accurately reflects the tendency that has come to the fore in spirituality since the 1980s, and publishers have been quick to spot that this is the label under which books are most likely to be sold. In both countries, the direction of travel is also evident in the way that such books are also now classified under the heading of "Self-help" and "health and lifestyle" (*Amazon.co.uk* now has "Religion & Spirituality" and "Mind, Body & Spirit" as its main categories, while *Amazon.com* has "Religion & Spirituality" and "Health, Mind and Body").

Practitioners themselves often use the simpler terms "holism" and "holistic spirituality" (Heelas and Woodhead 2005).

What these changing labels indicate is a significant shift within popular spirituality away from purely "spiritual" or "metaphysical" concerns toward more bodily and practical ones, a shift that was already evident in New Age, and has become increasingly strong since the late 1980s. Both formless mysticism and occult spirituality had a strongly idealist and often dualistic emphasis – that is to say, they regarded material and bodily existence and practices as the lowest rung on a spiritual ladder, and represented enlightenment as an ascension from the material to the spiritual. In many ways, New Age continued this gnostic tendency, with its focus on a spiritual "Unity" into which bodily and material difference and limitation must ultimately dissolve (in nineteenth and early twentieth-century spirituality such idealism often went hand-in-hand with a rather ascetic ethical emphasis; in New Age this gave way to a more hedonistic emphasis). In holistic spirituality however, the body attains a still greater level of importance than in New Age. The aim is no longer to transcend bodily limitations, but to enter more deeply into bodily existence, in order to access the realms of mind and spirit. The body becomes a gateway to the spirit, as holistic "well-being" of mind, body and spirit becomes a more salient goal than enlightenment, changed consciousness, escape from the ego, or realization of the "god within" (Sointu and Woodhead 2008).

This significant shift seems to be bound up with the popularization and "democratization" of spirituality – with its increasing spread beyond the ranks of social and cultural elites – and, above all, with an increasing involvement by women. In Kendal we found that 80% of those involved in holistic spirituality were female. Moreover, they often had a certain profile: middle-aged, educated perhaps to degree level and often with a background in some sort of caring activity or profession – such as teaching and nursing, as well as domestic care work for children, husband, and/or elderly dependents. They were attracted to holistic spirituality as practitioners because it gave them the freedom and the ability to care for others in a context of considerable autonomy in which they could have much greater control over how they practiced than had they been working in male-led institutional settings. Women are attracted as "consumers" of such spirituality because it offers a space which they cannot find elsewhere – neither in their own families nor in mainstream biomedicine – to voice problems, concerns and dis-eases, and to have them recognized and dealt with by people who seemed to understand, care and help (Sointu 2005). Many of those we interviewed were dealing with relationship issues, and several said they were seeking a better "balance" between care for self (often neglected) and care for others (often overwhelming). Holistic spirituality gave both permission and techniques for better understanding and management of their own feelings and desires, for improving the well-being of mind and body, and – if they so wished – exploring their spirituality.

Although middle-class women are often dominant in holistic spirituality, it also extends into the working class. During research with Helen Berger in Asheville, North Carolina, in 2006, for example, we visited a "double-wide" at a trailer park in an extremely poor area. Here material paraphernalia associated with holistic

spirituality (charms, crystals, tarot cards and so on) were sold, and there were also on hand a number of practitioners who were dealing with everyday issues including serious illness, depression and even a sick pet. In the northwest of England, Janet Eccles's doctoral research has also discovered holistic practitioners whose homes serve as regular ports of call for those in the local area from all classes who need help, advice and support with everyday problems – sometimes provided free of charge.

Martin Stringer (2008) argues that such spirituality is nothing new, but that it is simply the latest manifestation of the popular and practical religious practices that have always been the most important manifestation of religious life in the West – and elsewhere – but which fall under the radar of scholars' inappropriately calibrated concepts and methods. It is certainly true that counselor Janet Eccles's descriptions recall to some degree the "wise women" and religious healers of premodern times. And even if Stringer underestimates how much contemporary holistic spirituality is tied to the culturally-transmitted practices and beliefs of modern spirituality, it is at least plausible to see it as standing in a direct line with spiritualism – another popular spiritual movement that attained enormous popularity in the nineteenth century and has retained a presence in western societies ever since. Owen (2004) notes an important difference between spiritualism, which involves a partially passive openness to the spirit world, and occultism, which emphasizes the will and its active questing: holistic spirituality is closer to the former than the latter. But it also shares selected practices, such as tarot reading and magical rituals, with occult spirituality, including Wicca, while other of its favored techniques overlap with New Age.

If this characterization of holistic spirituality as a recent form of "popular" and "practical" religiosity that has more to do with misfortune management and negotiation of the problems and dis-eases of everyday life than with ascendance through esoteric practices and cosmological speculations toward a new state of consciousness is correct, then the nature of its relationship with Christianity becomes clearer. Insofar as modern churches sought to purify and cleanse Christianity of its "superstitious" practical and embodied elements, and insofar as clerical control made it hard for laypeople to relate the faith to their everyday lives and problems, that left a vacuum into which movements like spiritualism and, more recently, holistic spirituality could flow. The failure of science to offer meaningful answers to problems of fate, destiny and death, and the failure of mainstream medicine to provide lasting solutions to many mental as well as physical ailments and conditions, has only accelerated the process. Moreover, while barriers to entering the churches may be high (including some knowledge of theology and liturgy, acceptable deportment and self-presentation), as holistic spirituality has become culturally mainstream and more and more readily available within the marketplace of health, beauty and well-being provision, the barriers to entry – for women more than for men – have become very low.

It is, then, particularly interesting and significant to note that many forms of Christianity have started to incorporate practices very similar to those of holistic spirituality. Charismatic-evangelical Christianity already had a tradition of bodily healing, inherited from earlier Pentecostalism (McGuire 2008). But the last couple

of decades have also seen mainstream and historic churches, both Catholic and Protestant, start to make use of rituals and services of healing; to encourage prayer and petition and the tying of "prayer ribbons"; to have services of healing, prayer and intercession; to introduce forms of meditation and "mindfulness" technique; to host yoga classes and *reiki* healings; and to introduce small group and one-to-one therapeutic services like pastoral counseling and, in more conservative Biblical churches, "Biblical counseling." In the more liturgical churches, there is also some revival of older practices that had fallen into abeyance, including invocation of angels, prayers for the souls of the dead, placing of personal objects on graves, use of talisman and votive objects, and the practice of exorcism and the laying on of hands.

In this context we must consider the Roman Catholic Church's pastoral report *Jesus Christ the Bearer of the Water of Life – A Christian Reflection on the New Age* (Pontifical Council 2003). "New Age" is used here in a loose sense to refer to the whole gamut of modern, non-Christian spirituality (which the report tends to amalgamate into a single form). But serious consideration is given to contemporary spirituality, and there is an honest acknowledgement not only that it is attracting many Christians, but that in some ways it is also providing the same goods which the Church should be offering. There is even the suggestion that "New Age" should serve as a stimulus to the Church to recover neglected aspects of its own spiritual provision. Thus, although much of the "theology" of New Age is criticized as defective (for example, failure to acknowledge Jesus Christ, failure to worship God the Father, anthropocentrism, lack of a sense of sin) and is likened to the Gnostic heresy, and although New Age morality comes in for sharp criticism (self-centered, antinomian, failing to acknowledge the authority of the Church), there is also an acknowledgement that that the practical, bodily, emotional, meditative, ecological, and healing practices of spirituality have something to teach Christianity. As the report sums it up:

> This study invites readers to take account of the way that *New Age* religiosity addresses the spiritual hunger of contemporary men and women. It should be recognized that the attraction that *New Age* religiosity has for some Christians may be due in part to the lack of serious attention in their own communities for themes which are actually part of the Catholic synthesis such as the importance of man's spiritual dimension and its integration with the whole of life, the search for life's meaning, the link between human beings and the rest of creation, the desire for personal and social transformation, and the rejection of a rationalistic and materialistic view of humanity (2003: Foreword).

Whereas early forms of spirituality, like the Theosophy of Madame Blavatsky, were very much aware of their marginal status relative to Christianity, and at great pains to demonstrate their superiority, what *Jesus Christ the Bearer of the Water of Life* suggests is that by the turn of the new millennium, the shoe was on the other foot. Now even the world's largest church was forced to take spirituality seriously and to assess its own offerings in light of this closest of rivals. At the same time, holistic spirituality seems to have become far less concerned about Christianity than were early spiritual writers and far more relaxed about the relationship. Instead of imitating Christian genres and practices – by writing theologies and proposing transposed rituals – it is more likely to sit lightly to Christian practice while getting on with its own body-focused practices.

Neo-Paganism: Tradition, Ritual, Place

The discussion so far makes it clear that modern spirituality is a set of cultural symbols, ideas, practices, and institutional resources which are can be – and have been – creatively reinterpreted, rearranged and combined with other resources at different times and places for different purposes and constituencies. Spirituality is more flexible in this regard than church Christianity because there are no clerical authorities or designated scriptures or consecrated symbols to mark and police its boundaries, and because its lack of hierarchical structure leaves it open to new groups and individuals to offer a fresh interpretations and embodiments at any time. Older forms do not disappear. They may co-exist along with new forms, be re-combined to form new resources, or lie dormant until rediscovered and re-activated. Thus the century and a half of development surveyed in this chapter displays continuous change and adjustment, and we see growing internal diversity from the 1960s onward as "spirituality" becomes increasingly popular, and some of its elements enter into the cultural mainstream (including practices like yoga and meditation; ideas and concepts like holism, *chi*, *charkas,* and well-being; books like *The Celestine Prophecy* and the novels of Paul Coehlo; and figures like Starhawk, Deepak Chopra, and Oprah Winfrey).

The single most important development since the late 1990s has been the steady rise in popularity of various forms of "Paganism," which draws a sharp boundary with "New Age" and defines itself by contrast. Whereas New Age is idealist, optimistic, progressivist, and oriented around the individual self, Paganism puts the natural world at the very heart of its sacred scheme. In terms of beliefs and commitments, what unifies the wide variety of pagans is reverence for nature, the holism that results, and an acknowledgement and embrace of the dark and destructive aspects of life and the universe as well as nature's goodness (Harvey 2007). In terms of practice and organization, most pagans celebrate natural solar and lunar cycles and seasons, and take part in ritual activities and/or groups and networks. Some practice in solitude or with partners and friends, and some belong to small ritual groups and communities that meet regularly – including the "covens" of Wicca (Berger et al. 2003). There are national and trans-national festivals, gatherings, fairs, camps, and virtual networks and activities. Beyond such general commonalities, paganism is highly diverse and differentiated. Many pagans distinguish themselves in terms of their ancestry – for example, to various Wicca traditions; other groups trace different lineages to various indigenous traditions and associated places – for example, Druids and Heathens; some are politically activist and seek to change their own lifestyle; most are animistic (recognizing many spirits, gods, goddesses, often associated with particular spaces and places), but there is enormous variety in the "gods" who are acknowledged; some are centrally concerned with magical practices, while others downplay the magical aspect.

As well as drawing a boundary with New Age, paganism also differentiates itself from Christianity, since *paganoi* is a Christian as well as pre-Christian, classical, term for "country dwellers": rustics and indigenous peoples who have not yet heard

or accepted the orthodox religion, rather than "heretics" who reject and distort it. Before historical work like that of Ronald Hutton led to a re-evaluation, many pagans believed that they were reviving or keeping alive pre-Christian traditions that the Church had violently suppressed. Today most pagans accept that theirs is more a modern than an ancient tradition, and that attempts to reconstruct ancient "paganism" involve more invention than reconstruction; but they nevertheless find inspiration in past and present animistic traditions that maintain a closer connection with and deeper reverence for the natural world than modern science or Christianity. Many pagans are correspondingly relaxed about Christianity, particularly in Europe. Despite being aware of their differences, some recognize that the churches kept alive aspects of indigenous traditions, and some are happy to share sacred spaces and festivals with Christians. In the United States the differences are more likely to be sharper, as Rountree (2004) finds this in her study of paganism. In our own research in Asheville (a center of alternative spirituality as well as conservative Christianity), we noted something similar and found that it was evangelical Christians who were most actively hostile to paganism, rather than vice versa.[5] Just as in relation to mind, body, spirit practices, so in relation to paganism, we seem to be seeing Christianity on the defensive. Again, this suggests a turn in the tide of their relation, and a growing recognition by the churches of the popularity and "threat" posed by spirituality.

On the other hand, the growth of paganism, like that of holistic spirituality, has produced some new examples of convergence and linkage between Christianity and this latest version of popular spirituality. In our research in Kendal, for example, we found that the two kinds of Christians most likely to engage in spiritual as well as church activities were (a) those from "high" churches that gave a central place to ritual – both high Anglican and Roman Catholic and (b) those from "low," radical Reformation churches, particularly Quakers and Unitarians. These findings have been reinforced by Vincett (2009) who has investigated the phenomenon of what she refers to as "fusing" between Christians and pagans. In terms of (a), the "ritual" convergence between spirituality and Christianity, we can note the phenomenon of some ritual spaces and associated ritual practices being shared by Christians and pagans. For example, the Chalice Well Garden in Glastonbury is an ancient Christian, and quite possibly pre-Christian, sacred site that has been turned into a sacred garden containing both Christian and pagan symbols in an easy harmony – statues of the Virgin and child next to those of pagan goddesses. Similarly, we can observe the increasing use and construction of labyrinths in Christian as well as pagan sites: their use for silent, walking meditation is the same in both, and their roots are both Christian (for example, the labyrinth set in the floor of Chartres Cathedral) and pre-Christian. Similarly, a number of ancient sites like St Brigid's fire pit at Kildaire and Glastonbury Tor, are reverenced and used by Christian and pagan alike.

[5] One wealthy, middle-aged evangelical man I interviewed interpreted it as the work of Satan, and a sign that the end times were coming – that society was falling into a state of pagan sinfulness and openly embracing witchcraft, sexual licence and diabolical practices.

Convergences between radical forms of Protestantism and paganism are also visible. Some have been formalized into new fusions of religious identity, like "Quagans" (Quaker pagans), and "Greenspirit" – a nature-focused association formed by Unitarians with pagan leanings. Some fusings have a strong eco-political drive, which is, of course, in keeping with the politically activist heritage of radical Reformation Protestantism, as well as with the strong involvement of many pagans within transnational eco-political groups (Lynch 2007). There is also a strong feminist campaigning aspect to some of these groups and their activities.

Thus in the pagan "revival" and its growing influence, we may be witnessing yet another stage in the unfolding relationship between spirituality and Christianity. While the more doctrinally fixed, morally conservative and male-led forms of Christianity, particularly evangelicalism (and quite likely, before long, official Catholic teaching), explicitly repudiate paganism as an even more fundamental threat to Christianity than New Age, some theologically and politically radical Protestants embrace it, and – even more interestingly – so do some forms of sacramental Christianity. In the latter development it seems that this latest incarnation of spirituality may even be recalling Christianity to an aspect of its heritage that has been eclipsed by the twentieth-century tendency of many churches to become increasingly rationalized – *i.e.*, to repudiate "superstitious" and "magical" elements of their practice in favor of "clear" and "reasonable" propositional belief. Such rationalization of religion and the tendency to turn it into a purely "spiritual" force is challenged first by holistic spirituality with its emphasis on the body, and now in an even more thoroughgoing way by paganism's "re-enchantment" of the world, particularly of places, spaces and the body, through ritual action and myth-making (Berman 1981, Partridge 2005/2006). In doing so, it does not necessarily bring something new to sacramental forms of Christianity, but it recalls them to important aspects of their pre-rationalized existence, to popular practices that served to "enchant" the rhythms of nature and of human life, to sacralize local spaces and places, and to fill the world with sacred forces and spirits, both good and evil, male and female.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the development of spirituality from the mid-nineteenth century to the present by considering the changing phases of its relationship with Christianity in the West, particularly in the Anglophone world. The tendency in the academic world toward specialization means that scholars of religion often look at religious traditions in isolation from one another and in bounded historical periods. Yet there is much to be gained by taking a more holistic view that considers the development of different kinds of religion in relation to one another, rather than in isolation, across time and across space. Here I have tried to illuminate spirituality and Christianity by tracing stages in their changing relationship over a century and a half. Of course, a truly comprehensive picture would have to consider their relation not only to one another, but also to other cultural resources and social

contexts. But by virtue of spirituality's genesis in a Christian milieu, and because Christianity and spirituality have become the two most popular religions for the cultural and ethnic majorities of the modern West, that relationship has a particular importance that justifies singling it out for attention.

I have distinguished five main phases in the unfolding relation between these two forms of majority religion. The account is made complex by the fact that both Christianity and spirituality have been subject to significant change in the period under consideration. Spirituality has grown in popularity, become more culturally mainstream and attained significant internal diversity. Christianity, already internally diverse, has lost numbers – especially in Europe – and been subject to internal realignments in which the "historic churches" dating from the eighteenth century and before – both Catholic and Protestant – have seen decline, while charismatic-evangelical churches have been the biggest winners. But these changes are best understood in relation to the changing relationship between Christianity and spirituality, and vice versa. The causal linkages are complex: some change comes about through processes of mutual influence and borrowing as well as mutual repudiation and differentiation, and both forms of religion are also impacted by, and bound up with, wider social, cultural and political changes. (It would be fascinating, for example, to consider the different ways in which spirituality has been institutionalized in the last few decades in social spheres formerly dominated by Christianity – for example, in hospitals, schools, prisons, workplaces, the media and the marketplace, as well as to consider social domains in which Christianity still maintains a monopoly.)

Broadly speaking, the story that has emerged – despite these complications – is one whereby spirituality begins as a reforming "reaction" to Christianity, defines itself over and against Christianity, and draws on popular historic and contemporary sources and resources (Asian religions, spiritualism, Romanticism, hermeticism etc.) to clarify its distinctiveness. It attains a clear profile and a self-conscious identity, but its loose organizational and ideological boundaries predispose it toward constant change and modification by groups and individuals who adapt it to their own ends. As spirituality has grown and changed since the 1960s, and particularly after the 1980s with the rise of mind, body, spirit practices and paganism, the relationship with Christianity has shifted, along with the balance of power and influence between them. Now it is more often Christianity that reacts to spirituality than vice versa. It does so not only in the voices of a few critical theologians, but also in official reports, teachings, consultations and conferences. The reactions, however, vary enormously between different strands of Christianity. And in a final, most recent phase, we are starting to see a fascinating development, whereby ritualized forms of pagan spirituality may be starting to recall some Christians to aspects of their own tradition, including the importance of ritual and a sacramental emphasis on the bodily and material as a channel of divine grace and epiphany. It is possible that what we are witnessing is contemporary forms of spirituality encouraging a "re-enchantment" and a "de-rationalization" of late modern Western religion both outside the churches and within some of them. Thus the story of the tangled relationship between spirituality and Christianity is still unfolding, and there are no doubt some fascinating and unpredictable developments still to come.

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Chapter 2
Spirituality and Systems of Belief

Enzo Pace

The aim of this chapter is to start from the concept of religion as communication and show its heuristic utility for discussing the notion of spirituality. Religion as communication relies on the language and concepts of the social systems theory applied to religion (Pace 2008). The theoretical assumptions can be briefly outlined as follows:

(a) Religion is a system of means of communication that strives to reduce the complexity of possible meanings that individuals attribute to the world of life;
(b) Religion in this sense is an organized system of communication that interacts with changeable social environments in different historical settings and different social, cultural, multi-religious landscapes;
(c) Spirituality is a generic formula by which the observer could label a variety of attitudes and behaviors by individuals in search of meanings who don't refer necessarily to a set of meanings within a system of religious belief.

If the notion of spirituality thus is to be used validly in the sociology of religion, at least three conditions must be satisfied:

(a) It should not be a residual category;
(b) It should be a relatively free-standing concept;
(c) It should derive from the basic relationship between a system of belief and its environment, which is, by definition, more varied, complex and broader than the system itself.

In other words, for the category of spirituality to be valid, it must be not only conceptually autonomous but also *in a dialectic relation to* a system of belief or with various systems of belief that have their own history and hegemony in the society.

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What in the language of social sciences in the West is conventionally termed *religion* is in fact simply the name we give to differentiated, complex systems of belief concerned with the sacred. Systems of belief are constantly defining the confines of the sacred, and it is through this work that they accumulate specialized knowledge and various forms of power (ranging from control of the individual's conscience to the direct or indirect management of political power). The systems tend to treat the sacred as an object, thus depriving the individual of the power of direct experience or reducing the potentiality of meaning concealed within the sacred itself. When reduced to an object, the sacred becomes *order* of the heart and of the mind, of the soul and of the body, i.e. social order (Durkheim 1922). Sacred, indeed, is a meaning-formula by which we can examine what happens across and along the boundary between the system of belief, on one hand, and the world of believing, on the other (Beyer 1998). The latter is the realm of multiplicity and variability of meanings.

From this point of view spirituality is the exceeding meanings and senses produced by individuals in the socio-religious environment – that is, in tension with a system of belief. Therefore the relation between a religious system and its socio-religious environment could be studied as the tension between *power* (of communication and meanings *for* the system) and *empowerment* (the relatively friendly chain of communication created by individuals) in *spirituality's realm.* In the case of an organized system of religious belief the empowerment is constantly scrutinized, directed in an orderly way according to the power of communication exercised by authority, specialists in holy matters and holy doctrine. The aim is to avoid not only any deviation from orthodoxy, but also to affirm the existence of the border between religion and magic, the purely symbolic and objective order of communication, on one hand, and the individual, changeable and unpredictable set of meanings that individuals could subjectively attribute to the same event or symbol treated by the former.

In this sense spirituality could concern the internal life of a religious system too. Charismatic revivals or the invention of new ascetic or mystic rules represent in many cases the emergence of a new spiritual path to interpret the symbolic capital scrupulously guarded and cared for by a system of religious belief. There is, thus, permanent tension between the objective dimension of a religion and the individual, subjective understating and practicing of a religion. Therefore I can describe the various forms of spiritual empowerment, what we could call spirituality, as a sort of *gradient,* a line of closeness/distance to and from an organized system of belief. The gradient of the spirituality shown on the following page measures the various level of individual chances to manipulate the meaning to be attributed to a set of symbols and religious practices. Moving from the left to the right of the gradient, when one is metaphorically "close" to the system, one has to adjust oneself to a pattern of believing and acting defined by a religion; meanwhile, the other pole marks the relative maximum distance from an established system of belief.

Fig. 2.1 Gradient of Forms of Spiritual Empowerment and Systems of Belief*

←Spirituality→		
Closeness to a System of Belief		**Distance from a System of Belief**
Internal conversation and prayer		Forms of meditation
Pilgrimage	Faith healing	New Age
Magic	Mysticism	Pentecostalism
Charismatic and Prophetic movements		

*The concept of "internal conversation" is derived from Archer 2003.

I would like to argue in this chapter the hypothesis I have presented up until now, showing to what extent it could be useful assume the language and concepts of systems theory.

The System of Belief and the Power of Communication

The meaning concealed within the sacred becomes normalized as part of a system. The excess meaning that the sacred possesses, which is available to the free experience of individuals, is brought within the functional logic of the system of belief, controlled by its knowledge and its power. The sacred becomes an object of the system's communication, part of its communicative power. What we might call the "violence of the sacred" (Bourdieu 1971) – i.e., the force of disorder – is thus tamed and transferred within a system that transforms it into a symbolic resource to strengthen the feeling of solidarity in a given group (Girard 1972).

Generally speaking, religions establish an order of the heart, working on people's noble sentiments and profound emotions. By doing so, religions tend to absorb the ocean of meanings that an individual may attribute to what we call the sphere of the sacred, the undefined, that which we imagine beyond the limited confines of human experience. A system of religious belief confines the meaning of the sacred within certain well-defined areas – various ritual performances (Rappaport 1999) – and times – various redemption calendars. Thus, the liturgies become rituals of interaction and communication that help to fix the meaning that should be attributed to any given object of faith in the individual's memory, gestures and cultural behavior. In their turn, the various conceptions of redemption or salvation, attempt to dominate time by indicating the direction the individual should take in order to be saved – or rather to *feel* she or he is saved.

In theory, the sacred is a broad semantic field in which we can creatively produce an infinity of meanings pertaining to human existence and relations between the realm of immediate survival and usefulness, on the one hand, and what we imagine is beyond immediate use, on the other (Schütz and Luckmann 1973, 1989; Luckmann 1996). The problem of communication stems from the meaning, and its surplus of polysemic possibilities, in the religious sphere. When dealing with this topic, we need to bear in mind that, for systems of religious belief, the believers' subjective

behavior has to be distinguished from the functioning of the system *per se*, which – to the observer's eye – may seem to leave the people out of consideration.

Systems of religious belief are variants of social systems, just as are numerous other possible systems in more or less complex societies. The social dimension of such systems (including those on a religious basis) consists in that they are enacted ("action" as used by Weber and Parsons) within a system through communication. While Weber had seen social behavior as a type of action oriented toward calculation or value and Parsons, dissatisfied with the end point of Weber's theory, went so far as to say that the action *is* the system (i.e., that social action is possible only within socially predefined norms), Luhmann claims that the system is founded not so much on the individual's actions, but on communication.

In fact, communication is a complexity-reducing process the success of which relies on actions, or rather it needs to be dismantled and rearranged into actions (Luhmann 1990: 253). It is not the actions that build the social systems, but vice versa: in order to function, the latter need to be dismantled into actions. When I speak here of communication, I'm not really talking about the transfer of information from a broadcaster to a receiver, but about a *meaning selection process*. Communicating means choosing a meaning from among several possible meanings, processing this meaning and using it in a symbolic transaction with a potential other party, who does not merely receive it, but may also conduct a similar selection process on its possible meaning.

Communication relies on the fragile balance of this dual contingency: what is a clear, unequivocal choice for *ego* may well not be so for *alter,* who may suggest his or her own choice of meaning. With a given repertoire of possible options of meaning, I select something that is circulated in the form of a discourse. So communication is seen not as an action, a discourse, the act of enunciating and awaiting a response, but as a unit consisting simultaneously of an item of information and the act of communicating and understanding it or the expectation that what is communicated will be accepted, since it may also be refused. As Luhmann explains (1990: 262), when we read that tobacco, alcohol, butter, frozen meat and so on are bad for our health, we are changed. Whether we believe it or not, we become people who now know better. Once we have received the information, we may believe it or not. The communication changes our attitude, however, in that it obliges us to decide whether or not to believe what we have been told. The new status that we acquire as a result did not exist before – and *did not exist without the communication*. Acceptance or rejection (believing or disbelieving) are consequent actions that are not part of the structure of communication, since this already demands making a selection from among some (and not other) possible meanings. Communication creates the social framework in which actions (of acceptance or rejection) may or may not take place.

Because of its very selectivity, communication must be able to cope with coordinating the reciprocal choices made within a social system as a whole. Politics, economics, science, law and other "parts" of a social system each process their own internal communication strategies: the problem that each of them faces is how to coordinate its choices with those made by the other structural elements of the system.

If I apply these considerations to religions, I can say that a system of belief functions through communication, since agreement or disagreement with the content of

truth (the meaning attributable to a given set of propositions of faith) depends less on the inclinations of individuals and more on the ability of a system to choose "characteristic signs" for each case, i.e. beliefs that can be shared by the largest possible number of people, allowing for the fact that not everyone will share them, enabling them to be seen socially as *ecclesia*, as a means of symbolic generalization. Nowadays, we conventionally speak of Muslims, Catholics, Buddhists, and so on, though we are well aware from our empirical investigations that societies with a Catholic majority cater for many different ways of being Catholic, just as in the case of Islam there are many different ways of relating to the Muslim faith, and so on. Pluralism in actions is brought down in this case to a means of symbolic generalization – Catholicism "regardless" or Islam "regardless" – that conveys something rather different from what individual believers might communicate in their actions and day-to-day behavior.

A religion that works as a means of symbolically generalized communication has achieved a high level of self-awareness and/or self-referentiality. It can be said to be universal not so much because it has extended its influence to various parts of the planet, but rather because it has become a system of belief that can disregard the issue of whether the "official" beliefs, selected and communicated as such, are more or less well received. The growing conviction that they are accepted is a consequence of communicative actions implemented by a system to generate and continue to regenerate itself, i.e. of its *autopoietic virtues*.

The Surplus of Meaning

Therefore, if we regard the sacred as that which *exceeds the meaning normally attributed by systems of belief* to the experience of the undefined, *spirituality* may be defined as the irreducible tendency to imagine and experience the sacred in ways *other than* those prescribed by a system of belief. This is not to say that there is necessarily an opposition between systems of belief and spirituality. It could be said that there exists a necessary correlation between these two notions, since a system of belief can exist only in relation to a vaster and more complex social and religious environment (Van Otterloo 1999; Hamilton 2000; Houtman and Mascini 2002; Possamai 2003; Grant et al. 2004; Besecke 2005; Helaas et al. 2005).

It is within this relationship that spirituality can be used as a category or concept that serves to explain the irreducible nature of the meaning that exists outside systems of belief. Such systems claim to be able to tell us what we should believe in, but belief has greater degrees of freedom and at times does not follow the words of the system. It is not content to accept the terms laid down by the system of belief, but tends to disregard the symbolic boundaries that the system claims to fix and explore other possible meanings of the sacred. Thus spirituality should not be regarded as a residual category, i.e. what is left when believing is subtracted from belonging. It does not arise from the separation of believing and belonging. Having become an autonomous concept, believing produces meanings that are different from those codified by an institution or by any given religious tradition (Cipriani 2006;

Giordan 2006; Houtman and Aupers 2006). *Spirituality*, therefore, is the name we give to the environment or, rather, to what in systems theory is the environment *for* a system of belief (Luhmann 1995). This is reflected in the great diversity of beliefs that have emerged from recent empirical studies (Halmann 1993; Garelli et al. 2003, 2006; Inglehart and Norris 2004; Cesareo 2005), despite the strict methodology habitually used by sociologists in such surveys.

A recurrent finding is that the meanings that individuals attribute to those beliefs indicated by a dominant religious system as the set of fundamental beliefs without which, from the point of view of a given religious institution, there is no authentic faith are manifold, contradictory and blurred. Spirituality is therefore a label on the basis of which we name all those *median ways* which in the environment of a system of belief may be paths, with greater or lesser degrees of freedom, undertaken by individuals in search of what Heelas (1995) has called "the spirituality of the perennial," which express the need at the same time to "be true to oneself" and for "intermingled, interfused, forms of the religious – or religious-cum-secular." As some scholars have suggested, spirituality in this sense can also be seen as an expression of *dedifferentiation* (Beckford 2003). In the light of systems theory, we should make the latter concept quite clear in order to avoid ambiguity. If by *dedifferentiation* we mean the need to cross the symbolic boundaries that religions have traditionally laid down and the urge to garner symbols coming from other religious fields, then it should be made clear that such an attitude – this is not the place to go into the issue of whether it is typical of religious modernity or post-modernity (Hervieu-Léger 2003) – implies a process of differentiation in the socio-religious environment which no system is today capable of controlling, reducing and dominating with the force of its communicative apparatus.

I am tempted to use the expression *out of order* in its more literal sense to describe spirituality in connection with the following phenomenon: national and international surveys reveal that a growing proportion of the population considers itself to be outside the dominant symbolic and religious order. They are independent believers and "the other third of us." This has brought about a crisis in the order: there is something that is "out of order," something that does not work in its capacity to turn external differentiation into internal differentiation. At the same time, such people declare themselves "no longer in service" with respect to the standards of belief laid down by a system of belief that attempts to define the boundaries of belief.

Back to the Future

At this point of analysis, in order to give an example to support to my argument, it may be helpful to go back to the past and to a classic of religious sociology. The past gives us an ideal type of belief: Gnosticism. This notion is closer to the third ideal-type of *Spiritualismus* analyzed by Ernst Troeltsch (1912). In particular, the idea of linking the new forms of spirituality with Gnosticism was proposed by a prominent Italian historian, Giovanni Filoramo (1983), who has often spoken of neo-Gnosticism.

Gnosticism arose and spread as a movement in the second and third centuries c.e. in the area around the Mediterranean in environments influenced by Judaism and early Christianity. There was later contamination with certain Islamic currents, especially after the great schism in 680 that divided the Sunnites from the Shiites, who, more than other movements, would later feel the effects of the Gnostic traditions in the Persian area. Gnosticism is of interest to us here as an ideal type of socio-religious belief. Our interest does not lie in its influence on religious history in that extraordinary period of prophets, preachers, ascetics and mystics who appeared on the scene in the first centuries of the so-called Christian era. This has been very effectively illustrated by the sociology of early Christianity over the last 20 years.

If we take a closer look at the features of the ideal type Gnosticism, we realize that present-day spirituality is in many ways very similar. Briefly, there are two elements that appear analogous or have elective affinity:

(a) The idea that salvation may be achieved through *knowledge*; such knowledge is clearly esoteric, in the sense that it cannot be reduced to true/false binary logic, but places a value on intuition, mystical experience, (presumed) hidden meanings in the better-known or dominant religious messages. The *gnostikos*, in fact, were those who claimed to know the way to salvation through firsthand experience.
(b) The idea that knowledge is basically self-knowledge; discovering the divine particle that lies within each one of us enables the individual – if he or she embraces the Gnostic way – to think otherwise, to explore meanings and cross boundaries that the dominant conventions laid down by established religions would prevent a person from doing otherwise.

In light of historical and sociological considerations on Gnosticism, I can state that "spirituality" is a sociological label that can be used to observe and classify the "multiple choice" enjoyed by those who believe and who seek a meaning to attribute to their lives (Roof 1999, 2003; Wuthnow 2001). This would authorize us to talk not so much of a weaker sense of *belonging*, as of *multiple-belonging,* and this is confirmed not only by recent research into what is called New Age-Next Age or New Religious Movements (Berzano 1999; Bruce 2002; Stark and Introvigne 2003; Barker 2004, 2005; Barker and Wilson 2005; Helaas et al. 2005), but also by the social and organizational features that modern forms of spirituality produce. Even when groups or movements continue to declare themselves part of a church or long-standing religious tradition, the individual's identity is not unified and compact, but multifaceted. Examples of this would be the Catholic Neo-Pentecostal or Neo-Catechumenal movements (McGuire 1982; Marzano 2009; Roldan 2009).

Conclusion

The classic work of Ernst Troeltsch on the sociology of religion is of great importance to the matter in hand. In Troeltsch's well-known typology, *Spiritualismus* appears alongside church and sect. Although the German sociologist was reflecting on Christianity, his ideas may be generalized, naturally with all the due caution of

which historians are quick to remind us when we sociologists attempt to compare different symbolic and religious worlds (Séguy 1980). Interestingly, Troeltsch does not regard *Spiritualismus* as residual. He shows that, despite attempts to reduce the complexity of Jesus of Nazareth's original message either according to the model of the Church or that of a sect, Christianity was unable to "saturate" – as it were – the religious semantic field it had opened up by offering room for creativity and free interpretation to those who could not identify completely with a model of belonging such as the portmanteau Church or the community-sect for a select few. *Spiritualismus* is a different thing altogether: it is the re-elaboration of pre-existing symbolic material which has become the subject of direct, inner-personal experience and releases the hidden esoteric meanings of a patrimony of symbols – Bourdieu's "symbolic capital" – which is defined and defended, with varying degrees of symbolic violence according to Bourdieu (1971), within its boundaries (Pace 2006, 2008).

These may be crossed and explored and re-worked in various ways by spirituality. Meaning can also be kept within mobile boundaries. The great religious institutions are disturbed by the mobility that spirituality creates in believing. As Troeltsch points out, the fact that this type of spirituality finds it hard to tolerate the organization of either church or sect confirms its impatience toward the sense of organized, monolithic and stable belonging to one salvation institution or another. Along these lines, Weber speaks of the anti-economic nature of charisma, something different from the marketing and consumption of products for the spirit which the modern market for salvation goods has appropriated. If the individual can save himself by becoming an independent entrepreneur of his own salvation, then we can understand how it is that spirituality, in the light of systems theory, blocks the power of communication which is conventionally attributed to religions as systems of belief. Spirituality is what limits that power. It is the open field of meanings attributed to the sacred that cannot be otherwise reduced. Spirituality therefore tends to be an empowerment for the individual and, sometimes, a relative loss of power for a structured system of belief.

In conclusion, if I acknowledge religion this structure, then I can take another step and ask myself whether this very structure is the autonomous principle of systems of religious belief. This means that, even before we study a religion's social performance we need to start, from a methodological standpoint, by assuming that religion is a system that has continued to build and rebuild its relationship with the social environment, which changes with time. Unless we focus on this inseparable relationship, we risk failing to understand the dynamics of the religious phenomenon; spirituality is another name we can give to the change and variety of the social environment. Consequently, the process that constructs and defines the symbolic boundaries of a system of religious belief takes place in an environment crowded with religious symbols and other systems of belief (religious and otherwise). In defining itself, a religion has the problem of distinguishing itself from this environment, increasing its internal complexity in the process. It consequently tends to withdraw within itself, emphasizing its own identity specifically in order to interact better with and be open to changing and multiple environments. In defining itself, a religion has the problem to coping with the variable interpretations of its symbols

by individuals in search of meaning and sense – what is today called spirituality. Therefore the couplet "religion/spirituality" means the level of socio-religious differentiation we can observe in concrete reality. Differentiation lies at the very origin of a system of belief because, before the system exists, there is a *virtuoso of improvisation*, a mobile personality who shifts the boundaries of the historically dominant beliefs in a given environment and, by means of variations on the earlier symbolic themes, invents a new way of interpreting them. From this point of view, every system of religious belief contains *variation* and *mobility*, and the more these two characteristics are present in the beginnings of the system, *before* the system existed, the more we must expect these characteristics to be transferred in the system-building process. Much more than Weber, Troeltsch (1912) has given us an exemplary demonstration of how we can study Christianity, for instance, from a historical and sociological standpoint, as a generative grammar of both spiritual and organizational models that are highly differentiated, not only in relation to the different settings in which a religion has been successful, but also by virtue of its original charge as a religion *in movement*, designed as if it had *moving partitions*.

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Chapter 3
Religious Pilgrimage, Pilgrimage Spirituality and Everyday Life

William H. Swatos, Jr.

For all intents and purposes some form or other of pilgrimage activity takes place in all world religions today and has taken place in most religions for at least the last 2,000 years. The possible exception would be Confucianism, but one might similarly question whether there is any pure Confucian practice in the present era and similarly could point to the syncretism that has characterized Chinese folk practice in the past. For the most part in this chapter I will confine myself to Christian examples, yet I think it is the case that the tendencies of which I will speak can be generalized to other world traditions with simply minor adjustments to fit specific doctrinal differences that in themselves affect the behavioral aspects of the experience minimally, if at all.

Until the sixteenth century, pilgrimage was a significant devotional experience in all major religious traditions. The break in Western Christianity at that time created a marked distinction between Protestants and Catholics in this regard, and the physical destruction of shrines at what were previously major sites of pilgrimage devotion was one of the most frequent accompaniments of Protestant triumph in any geographic region – a topic to which we shall return later. Thus from that time until the twentieth century two very different pieties grew within the Western Christian world. An interesting comparison can be made here between Christians and Muslims across this same period – for while Christians split over whether or not to "do" pilgrimage, Muslims tended to argue over whether Sh'ites or Sunnis should have primary custody of a site – and to some extent different sites became foci of conflicts also over whether or not they were really "holy" places, depending on a particular conquering sect's take on the piety/orthodoxy of whoever happened to be interred in them.

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Historically all world religions also regulated pilgrimage – that is, defined the conditions under which a person might be recognized as a "true" pilgrim. These remain more in evidence in some places than others today, perhaps the most well documented of these in the West being Compostela, where a "true" pilgrim is recognized by both a document and, in effect, a talisman, in the form of a scallop shell. Some pilgrims keep these as a mark of their own piety, while others upon returning home leave them in a church or chapel where a particular vow or promise was made in return for divine favor bestowed. That is, the person offers his or her pilgrimage in thanksgiving for a blessing, then upon return, presents the shell to the saint or sanctuary whose intercession or holiness is considered to have effected the blessing received. This form of symbolism also has been recognized through secular counterparts; for example, my college social fraternity, which has Nile-related "mysteries" presents a fez to any member who attends one of its national conventions. No member is required to attend a convention to be a member, hence attending the convention represents a secular "pilgrimage," a work of "supererogation" that is so recognized by a formal ceremony in which the fezzes are distributed. Many other secular societies have similar kinds of paraphernalia to signify these kinds of secular pilgrimages, not least veterans' organizations.

What is important to recognize about these kinds of pilgrimage activities, whether of long historic duration or more recent invention, is that *in all cases they were rule-bounded*. That is, "doing the pilgrimage" required certain conditions to be met before, during and at the conclusion of the activity. In her work on Compostela, for example, based on field research in the early 1990s, Nancy Frey (1998) could still provide evidence of an unbaptized Japanese pilgrim who was denied the award of the completion certificate (the *Compostela*) of the "proper" pilgrimage because she was not a Christian.[1] Even last year, when we were doing our work at Lourdes, receipt of the plenary indulgence required specific steps that included both confession and reception of holy communion, as well as visits to and prayers at specific sites, where a stamp would be placed on a pilgrimage medallion, and so on.

Indeed, this has a certain etymological validity in regard to *religious* pilgrimage, in the sense that the word "religion" itself comes from roots that suggest a law-like origin; that is, that religion in some sense rules-in or ties-back, thus has a governance quality to it. A person who is religious lives under a "rule of life," and those who declare themselves under a particular rule of life in public profession are often referred to, in turn, as "religious" or "in the religious life." Thus, "she's a religious" (something quite different from areligious) means the lady is a nun or sister, and Western Catholicism has a series of religious "orders" – the overriding characteristic of which is that their members live under obedience to superiors and follow

[1] Between the time of Frey's work and the present, a secondary form of recognition has been added by Compostela authorities to recognize those who make the pilgrimage but lack the religious qualification of Christian profession (see Chemin 2007). Given the enormous impact of Frey's book, it may be of more than passing significance to the economics of pilgrimage/tourism, that the publication of her book by the press of the University of California (where she took her degree) was in part due to a "generous gift from the Spanish Ministry of Culture toward" its publication.

specific rules of life. In terms of contemporary use, however, there is an irony here, inasmuch as historically the religious orders have also generated "spiritualities," hence persons make reference to Franciscan spirituality, Jesuit spirituality, Dominican spirituality, Marist spirituality and so on. While the most well-known usages along these lines occur in the Roman church, there are direct analogies in both Orthodoxy and Anglicanism, and corollaries in all the world religions. In some cases these can be intensified even further, as in "spiritual Franciscans."

With respect to pilgrimage, several dynamics have operated concurrently with differences of emphasis depending on particular locales and clienteles – all of which, however, were intertwined with some level of anticipated interaction with the numinous of a character that was extraordinary. That is, even though in traditional Catholic theology Jesus Christ himself became present at every sacrifice of the Mass – whether at the parish church down the street or Lourdes or St. Peter's – pilgrimage sites were considered to mediate graces of unique character. Pilgrimages could be undertaken for three predominant reasons: to ask for God's favor, as penance for sin, or as vowed thanksgiving for a favor already bestowed (witness, e.g., the scallop shell returned to a parish church by a person who had done the Camino). Gradually, however, and not least so after the rise of Islam, pilgrimages on the part of women were increasingly restricted – though never absolutely prohibited. In response to this, in turn, a substitutionary form of Christian pilgrimage developed in convents and parish churches in the form of Stations of the Cross, where the faithful could symbolically take the Walk to Calvary with Christ. Stations were especially popular as a convent devotion and had the additional benefit that they did not require the services of a priest – neither with respect to saying the Mass nor hearing confession. Women could themselves walk with Christ to the garden, to the cross and to the tomb.[2]

Fast forward to the nineteenth century: In her book *Consuming Visions,* Suzanne Kaufman (2005) has convincingly demonstrated that the apparitions at Lourdes, whose 150th anniversary was celebrated in 2008, marked a sea change in pilgrimage experiences. The "material precondition" for this was the railroad. The world changed: relative ease of travel and a market economy, along with the miracles that challenged scientific theories even as they were simultaneously verified by a medical bureau under the direction of a "professional" medical staff, created what would become in the twentieth century a pilgrimage "industry" running alongside and borrowing from, in a bricolage of its own, the tourism industry. (And I have to admit that when we "closed down" Lourdes on the 9th of December last year – and Lourdes does close down with almost breakneck speed on the 9th of December – Mrs. Swatos and I got on a plane for Nice on the afternoon of the 10th and played *touristas* quite happily for the next couple of days.)

[2] Although rosary devotion has some analogies to the Stations of the Cross, saying the rosary normally lacks movement whereas Stations normally involves movement, either of the entire group or of a leader and acolytes. A challenging classificatory issue in current practice, on the other hand, is the Web-based "virtual" pilgrimage, where people sit at their computers and are taken on a photographic (and sometimes auditory) "pilgrimage" through a site – normally in their aloneness.

But, for those of us in the English-speaking world at least, there is also a cautionary historical treasure that somewhat explodes the idea that all pilgrimage before the nineteenth century, the railroad and the airplane was rigidly controlled by ecclesiastical prerogatives and deeply engrained piety like no modern (let alone postmodern) person could possibly imagine. I refer to Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales.* I read it first in high school English. I laid it aside but never forgot it. In the midst of the sociology of secularization – from C. Wright Mills's critique of Parsons, summarized by Jeffery Hadden (1987) – the *Canterbury Tales* returned to me like an old friend who had good advice and much experience on his side. Chaucer sets the sociological record on the history of pilgrimage straight. The Swatoses thinking of the beaches of Nice while closing down Lourdes in December of 2008 were one with those whom Chaucer described on their way to Canterbury around 1387: human beings caught between this world and the next, the mundane and the transcendent, pleasure and piety. *Canterbury Tales* for me is not just a literary classic, but also a *sociological* classic (something I didn't know as a high-school sophomore). I think anyone who tries to talk about pilgrimage and tourism today without having read Chaucer talks ahistorically. Put differently: You can't talk about pilgrimage in historical perspective, if you haven't read *Canterbury Tales* – by which I mean that it is too frequently the case that today's accounts that contrast pilgrimages in earlier times to those in our own engage in a religious romanticism that gives inadequate weight to the role of the mundane even in the experience of the supermundane.[3]

In the context of postmodernity, nevertheless, the question of pilgrimage "spirituality" becomes re-opened in several important ways. I have tried to say already that in mainstream Christian tradition to be a "pilgrim" or to do a "pilgrimage" had specific quasi-legal requirements. These may well have varied from site to site – for example, going to Compostela was different from Achen, which was different from Canterbury, and all of these were different from the various Muslim sites. Nevertheless there were rules and definitions, whether they were observed by devotion or in the breach. That's what makes the *Tales* so wonderful.

What then makes our own time so different in respect to pilgrimage religion and the world of travel? Obviously, first is the "material condition" of speed. Whereas Phineas Fogg was quite the man about the universe when he went "Around the

[3] I want to make clear, however, that I am not saying that every time a human being goes somewhere, it should be called a pilgrimage. For example, a student's semester abroad is not a pilgrimage, even if it is a learning experience in any number of ways – neither is the drive to one's parish church or my walking to the post office in Galva a pilgrimage experience; nevertheless, it may well be that people really do make annual pilgrimages in their own eyes to Disneyworld, for example, where a kind of Neopagan faith in "the child" as implicit divinity may be realized. People may also in this same Neopagan way worship sports stars (especially deceased sports stars) and see national or international-level competitions as ritual high points of their faith. One thinks also in this respect of pilgrimages in the U.S. to Graceland, Arlington cemetery, Lincoln or Washington's tomb, etc., which surely have analogies in other societies. This is a matter that needs to be assessed with great care.

World in Eighty Days," we can go around the world in 80 hours – actually less. In fact, if you do it right, you can go around the world on commercial airlines at least twice in 80 hours. This really does change things, and indeed, if we are to talk about change, we must begin with the material conditions. Joanne, my RAs and I did go to Lourdes by train each time we went. To be honest, it was cheaper to do that than fly, but I also wanted, albeit with much faster trains, to have at least some touchstone with the experience of the pilgrims that Kaufman described. In that sense, we went the way those first pilgrims went – and returned too. But it is not just Lourdes. Indeed, as we look at pilgrimage around the world and across religions, it is quite possible for anyone of any religion (or no religion at all) with upper-middle class financial means to do almost any pilgrimage in the world with less than 24 hours' investment in getting there – sometimes in getting there and back. Chaucer would be knocked off his pins: How can you get a novel out of people snoring on a jumbo jet? So pilgrimage across all traditions has become a reasonable possibility not only for the wealthy but also for the professional and working classes, not simply in terms of the financial investment, but even more so the time investment. Local parishes across the United States organize pilgrimages to Lourdes, the Holy Land, St. Peter's, and so on across the whole year, which seldom require more than two-weeks' time and can sometimes run simply over a long weekend – for example, for a parish in the southwestern quarter of the U.S. to go on pilgrimage to Guadalupe. Hence, "doing a pilgrimage" becomes more a part of a wider circle of spirituality, which becomes integrated into the parish life of a congregation – blurring the historic difference between everyday congregational religiosity and that of the pilgrim/seeker. Parishioners from one pilgrimage cohort encourage the next and so on until, so to speak, "the whole parish" has made a pilgrimage.

What now are we to make of the "spiritual" as contrasted to the "religious" pilgrim? Obviously the time investment itself and the relative danger are radically reduced. Pilgrims today are much more likely to travel in mixed sex groups and to socialize in ways beyond the simplicity of hostel life. A pilgrimage can be undertaken with a minimum of self-denial, other than the financial cost of the trip. Much more significant, however, is the larger cultural shift between asceticism and mysticism. The principal historical reason for pilgrimage was remission of sins and life-everlasting. The dangers and physical demands of a pilgrimage constituted both trial and mortification. Rules had to be observed, penances performed. Today's pilgrimage is part of a larger cultural focus on the accumulation of experiences combined with "spiritual growth." What the person "gets out" of the experience is the measure of its value rather than what the person has "put into" it. Hence, we hear language along the lines of "I got a lot out of going to Lourdes" – and of course, in the case of Lourdes in particular, physical health is a central dynamic. A pilgrimage is not so much a "trial" (or test of faith) as it is an "opportunity" for spiritual growth "*for me*" as it were. That is, the external conditions of making and completing a formal pilgrimage give way to an internal evaluation on the part of the participant. The issue becomes its meaning *for me*, not a determination on the part of either church doctrine or ecclesiastical authorities of the character and worthiness of the devotion offered.

One evidence of this change has been, at least in the United States, an increase in Protestant pilgrimage/religious tourism, wherein Protestant clergy and devoted lay persons travel to sites of early New England Puritanism, for example, to see the churches of famous early divines and often express as one motivation for doing so a desire to "be able to stand in the pulpit" of this or that outstanding preacher – who would likely himself in his own era have found such adulation of this-worldly space and furniture quite inappropriate, if not actually sinful. But it again points to the spiritual-physical experience of "being there." It is quite clear here that notions such as the remission of sins or supererogation have no place. Even more important, especially since the establishment of the state of Israel, have been Jewish and Protestant pilgrimages to the sites of the Bible, particularly among the latter group in regard to the life of Jesus, but also in following the journeys of Paul, which have been explicitly promoted by Turkey as it has sought EU membership. These travels are quite at odds from seeking "the Jerusalem above, [which] is free and … the mother of us all." At the periphery of Protestantism also may be mentioned Mormon sites in several American locales, some of which consist of historical re-creations at considerable expense to the LDS Church, as well of course as the center of Salt Lake City itself. These tend as a whole to be more touristic, inasmuch as entrance to Mormon temples themselves is limited to Mormons. The touristic sites, however, are not without missiological purpose.

Another fascinating project that seizes on contemporary interest in pilgrimage on the one hand and on reconciliation on the other is the Art and Reconciliation Trust (conveniently acronymed ART) project to construct a "Memorial in Chelsea [London] to the Medieval Shrines Destroyed During the English Reformation" in Chelsea Embankment Gardens. Principal among these shrines were the images of Our Lady of Walsingham, the Black Madonna of Willesden, and Our Lady of Grace of Ipswich, all of which were burned in Chelsea to the delight of Sir Thomas Cromwell, who had been offered the use of Chelsea Manor during the central London plague of 1538. Two things about this project are worth noting: first, the funds for the construction of the memorial (by sculptor Paul Day) are to be raised by private donations – that is, there is no formal restitution being offered by the British government for the destruction of the shrine images; but second, all of these shrine images have already been restored in their historic locales, with Walsingham in particular being the most important site of Christian pilgrimage in the UK (see, e.g., Coleman 2004). The concept of "reconciliation" seems to be used as a bridge between sacred and secular "spiritualities" as evidenced, for example, in Day's recently completed sculpture "The Meeting Place" (commemorating refugee children from the Holocaust), at St. Pancras International rail terminal in London, though which concepts of travel, tourism and pilgrimage may all be subsumed – as may also the religious notion that someday we may all "merrily meet in heaven."

Among Catholics as well, sites have grown up that have nothing of the historic apparitional character or association with the personage of someone who has been formally canonized. For example, Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Illinois (largely drawing upon the substantial Catholic population of St. Louis) is what I would consider a quasi-pilgrimage site centered on charismatic devotion and

practice, such that people "make pilgrimage" there in the hope of a healing experience for themselves or a loved one, and the order that operates the church continues to build a more and more all-encompassing retreat/devotional facility, which attracts thousands of people each year. All of what appears at this site is at one level entirely "fabricated" in the sense that there is no historical connection between the physical site and any historical apparition. The site becomes holy by virtue of what happens in the here-and-now and not because of any connection with a charismatic *past*. A pilgrimage to this shrine of Our Lady of the Snows is one that seeks immediate dividends in a present spirituality that is nevertheless incarnated in a physical structure than recreates an imagined past in present terms. At the same time, however, Illinois's Our Lady of the Snows also has a semi-secular attraction in the form of a Christmas lights display to and through which thousands of people come by car or bus and "drive through" (cf. Giuriati et al. 1990; Schott 2008). Thus one might begin to distinguish between pilgrims and tourists here in terms of whether people enter the building or simply drive through. Until its partial destruction by vandals, the shrine of Our Lady of Clearwater in Florida had similar characteristics to the Illinois shrine, although in the Clearwater case the Marian image was of natural causes. In this case the distinction would be whether people stopped to light candles, bring flowers, and/or participate in a lay-led liturgy on the one hand or simply drove up to see it. The Clearwater shrine was also more influenced by the apocalyptic discourse of right-wing Catholicism than is Our Lady of the Snows, which is preeminently charismatic in its current inspiration (see Swatos 2002; Vásquez and Marquardt 2000).[4]

These American shrines may be contrasted in differing respects to two Marian shrines in Europe. One of these is the shrine of Our Lady of Knock, Ireland, which is historically a Marian shrine with specific physical components that are connected to Mary's appearance there in 1879. The church at Knock has been architecturally re-formed by the hierarchy, however, to impose redirected emphases within contemporary Catholic theology onto a physical space whose origin rests on a totally different hermeneutic. One can only conclude that on this site the official church wishes to co-opt the space for its own ecclesiological ends, in an era when parish church attendance is in decline, perhaps with an undertone as well of redirecting attention away from the relatively strong emphasis placed at that site on Mary as not merely the Mother of God, but more specifically, as "Mother of the Creator" (see Turner 2009). The other shrine is Our Lady of Superga in Torino. Given the *ex votos* at Superga, many of which reach back several centuries, one can surely see that the site was once explicitly connected to the miraculous. Nevertheless, today the site is primarily "historic" in nature, focusing on the Hapsburg dynasty, whose nobility are

[4] I have elsewhere distinguished the "pure tourist" type as a person who is preeminently concerned to have his or her own picture taken at a site, in the sense of being able to say, "Here *I* am at Our Lady of Snows. Here *I* am at Disneyworld. Here *I* am at Seaworld. Etc." (When families or groups do the same, of course, *we* can be substituted to the same effect.) If one talks with tourists of this type through enough photographs of themselves, they often come to the point where they do not remember what a particular site is, but still have the photograph of themselves there to show.

entombed there. This shift in meaning of a site represents how diverse interpretative schemas can be brought to the same space over time. Superga becomes much more a memorial to a by-gone era than a site of living devotion, hence it should not be assumed that every site of "the miraculous" remains charismatically endowed over time, even though prior charismatic endowment is plainly in evidence.

It is not only the case that the "return of pilgrimage" has been effected by the material conditions of transport, but also by the practical separation of church from state in much of the world, even if *de jure* established churches continue to receive some governmental benefit. When church and state were more thoroughly interwoven, pilgrimage could involve *national* interests. One might then think that in the era of practical separation such as our own, this would lead to a gradual disintegration of the sacred and the secular. *Mais non*, the globalization of pilgrimage has worked toward the internationalization of pilgrimage: Hence the decision of the Roman church to encourage the work of 20 "best known" European Marian pilgrimage sites, the European Marian Network (the number 20 being the number of decades in the rosary), the inaugural conference of which took place in Lourdes in 2003.[5] On the one hand, this creates an international pilgrimage route that reinforces the tourist economy of each state, reflected in the stated purpose of the annual meeting of the "animators" of each site: to "meet each year to get to know each other better and, above all, to understand better the needs of the millions of pilgrims and visitors who frequent these Sanctuaries." On the other hand, one cannot help but see in it at least some measure of attempt by the Roman church to assert a new "Catholic Europe" through the pilgrimage experience – that is, every country has a Catholic heart. In the words, ironically, of an Anglican hymnodist: "From the heart of blessed Mary/from all saints the song ascends/and the Church the strain re-echoes/unto earth's remotest ends." Global devotion to Mary trumps possible devotion to sites of national saints in the eyes of a "universal" church.

I want to conclude with reference to two publications on pilgrimage that appeared in 2006 and 2007 – very different in character from each other, but both testimony to the increasing impact that pilgrimage has had on world religious thinking in both the popular and more erudite social scientific writing in recent years: I refer to Harry Green's "The Virgin Mary Visits Hogfarts," published in the American Sociological Association's popular-interest magazine *Contexts* in 2006, and Ian Reader's "Pilgrimage Growth in the Modern World: Meanings and Implications," published in *Religion* in 2007.

To be satirized is generally held to be the highest form of praise. Harry Green gets at most one page per issue in *Contexts* (*i.e.*, four pages a year), and in effect he has to write something to which at least all American sociologists can more or less relate as a part of their lifeworld. For an apparition of the Virgin Mary, to have made

[5] The Marian element creates some oddities in terms of specific sites in connection with specific countries. In Spain, for example, Saragossa trumps Compostela; in Italy, Loreto trumps both Rome and Assisi. Cf. www.lourdes-france.org/index.php?goto_centre=ru&contexte=en&id=1007&id_rubrique=1007.

it into the lifeworld of the mythical Hogfarts, West Virginia is no small achievement. I felt more vindication for what I'd been studying in the last decade by that article than anything I'd seen before. Marian pilgrimage had made it not only to Main Street USA but even to secular sociology departments. No longer are we satirizing the Christian Right or the Hare Krishnas in airports. They've fallen by the wayside. Devotion to Mary is big time, and while there are certainly pilgrimages to shrines of hundreds of saints, there can be no question that it is the Marian shrines that are driving the present phenomenon within in the Christian world. But this is at the same time a phenomenon that reaches outside of the Christian world. For example, we found Buddhist tourists at the Chapel of the Miraculous Medal buying medals to take home to their families and friends – doubly curious inasmuch as the Chapel of the Miraculous Medal is not on the normal tourist routes. It must be sought out. Similarly, both Muslims and Christians come to pray at our Lady of Lebanon in the midst of great strife.

In a quite different mode, Ian Reader offers a global analysis of the rise of the numbers of people on pilgrimage throughout the world, not merely Christian pilgrims or pilgrims to Christian sites. He begins his conclusion by reference to Heelas and Woodhead's Kendal study (2005) suggesting that pilgrimage may be yet another manifestation of the "spiritual revolution" they describe, "in which the decline of the established churches was accompanied not so much by increasing secularization as by a turn away from traditions towards a more autonomous, individualized and personalized spirituality. The growing numbers of modern pilgrims who are visiting the sacred centers of religious traditions can similarly be seen as indications of this move away from religious affiliation and commitment and towards personalized spiritual search." He notes that while "pilgrimage has always offered a highly individualized scope for self-expression and religious search, as well as for escape from the restrictions of everyday social bonds and contexts," nevertheless "in earlier eras it was commonly located within the frameworks of [specific] religious traditions." Thus, "what is new is that, even while utilizing the frameworks provided by traditional routes, pilgrims [today] find it wholly reasonable to describe themselves as having no link to those traditions and to present their journeys solely in the context of a personalised and individualized framework of search and development." He hence concludes that "[w]hen growing numbers of pilgrims… can articulate their journeys in terms of New Age ideas and can engage in pilgrimages without feeling any need to engage with the religious traditions that have long been associated with them, and when new modes of pilgrimage distinctly separate from past traditions emerge to attract the attention of practitioners [e.g., Burning Man (cf. Gilmore 2006)], one can see how pilgrimage may not only be highly modern in nature but also pose new challenges to organized religions in the twenty-first century."

This brings us, now, to the third moment in the theme of the present book: How, now everyday life? With respect to Reader's very eloquent analysis in particular, I find myself pulled in two directions. I do agree that, as I indicated earlier, the material conditions that facilitate travel, in reduction of both time and comparable investment (financial and otherwise), bring a quite different character to pilgrimage today. Several of my students, for example, have produced excellent papers recounting

parents' or grandparents' pilgrimage/tours. In 10 days one set of grandparents did Fatima, Compostela, Lourdes, several churches in Paris, plus Chartres – and took in museums and local culture. The father of another of my student went with his parish choir to sing in several major European churches, including a Mass at St. Peter's officiated by Pope John-Paul II. I have their itineraries, photographs, etc. They clearly were engaging their own sacred traditions with friends who shared a common religious framework. Were their pilgrimages "legitimate"? Certainly the ones who went to Compostela didn't do the Camino "the right way," and would have been looked down upon by those who did, yet as both Chemin and Frey have shown, those who actually do the Camino "right" display a considerable diversity in their commitments, many of which are quite at variance from the religio-spiritual expectations of the Compostela "authorities."

On the other hand, I continue to believe, with Hadden and Mills, that there is a romanticization of the past, without the kinds of systematic social-scientific data collection available today. In that respect, I for one will cast my vote with Chaucer. "We ain't as good as we likes to think we are." And we never were. But there are moments of transcendence, big and little ones. Whether they take place at a mountain brook or the mountain-side hermitage of a twelfth-century holy man, whether they take place in Ave Marias at the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes or finding a special rock the river that runs beside it, "the dark night breaks, and the glory wakes" on the road to being there.[6]

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[6] The primary research at the Chapel of the Miraculous Medal and Our Lady of Lourdes reported here was done with the assistance of Sophie-Hélène Trigeaud and André Sleiman, as well as Joanne Swatos. Some of this material appears in Swatos 2009. With respect to the present material, I am grateful to Sarah Bill Schott, Phyllis Goudy Myers, and Sophie-Hélène Trigeaud for bibliographic assistance.

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Chapter 4
Lived Religion: Signposts of Where We Have Been and Where We Can Go from Here

Mary Jo Neitz

In the last decades of the twentieth century scholars of religion began searching for new ways to think about religion. New religious movements appeared in many places. Ordinary people in Europe and the United States appeared to understand their own religious practices as less defined by religious institutions than they imagined had been the case for their parents and grandparents. While most in the United States maintained belief in god, people were increasingly likely to change churches and denominations, and increasingly likely to seek religious answers in an array of devotional writings, voice recordings and DVDs, as well as workshops and retreats from diverse religious sources. Individual "seeking" was common among people born in the United States after World War II (Wuthnow 1998). While some scholars focused on the "decline" of religion, others looked at new forms of expression, and some sought ways to conceptualize religion as ordinary people practice it in their daily lives. This chapter will discuss the emergence of the concept of "lived religion" in the sociology of religion in the United States. I will review recent work in the field, discuss the deficiencies in the former conceptualization which scholars hoped to remedy, and explore what has been added to our understanding of spirituality and religion in everyday life by this body of work. I also suggest some dangers and point to directions for future work.

Background

As a graduate student at the University of Chicago in the 1970s, I was searching for an acceptable topic for my dissertation when students at the Catholic college where I was teaching introduced me to a large and active community that was part of the

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Catholic Charismatic Renewal. The group confounded many of my assumptions about religious belief. After some preliminary exploration, I choose it as the subject of my dissertation. No one in my department studied religion, and I needed some help figuring out what sociologists already knew. At the National Opinion Research Center, affiliated with University of Chicago, was Andrew Greeley, one of the foremost authorities on contemporary American Catholics. In addition to his scholarly research, he also wrote a syndicated newspaper column for the *Chicago Sun Times*, and later went on to write many best selling novels. One of my dissertation committee members, the young Irish-American professor Teresa Sullivan, offered to get me an appointment with the esteemed Fr. Greeley. I walked across the midway, over to NORC, and began to ask my questions: I wanted to know, for example, what kind of survey data we had on how many Catholics said that believing in Jesus meant they were saved. And how many Catholics practiced speaking in tongues. Fr. Greeley informed me that my questions "were not Catholic questions," and they were not ones NORC asked.

I left Fr. Greeley's office thinking that perhaps we should not assume that people who identified as Catholic necessarily conformed to what the church said that Catholics should believe. I became very interested in the tension between how the institutional church and its doctrines related to the packages of beliefs assembled by ordinary members and *vice versa*. As a graduate student, I read the groundbreaking works of European historians Carlo Ginzberg (1980) and LeRoy Ladurie (1978), and I became convinced that this tension between the "sacred canopy" provided by the dominant culture and articulated by the state churches, on the one hand, and the beliefs of individuals, on the other, was not solely a feature of our times. Both these readings and my fieldwork stimulated a critical approach to the received wisdom about secularization and modernity (cf. Berger 1967).

Studying the Catholic Charismatic Renewal provided a significant opportunity for thinking about religion in the last quarter of the twentieth century in the United States. I was initially curious about the process through which baptized practicing Catholics came to believe that they wanted and needed a second "baptism in the spirit" which brought with it gifts including speaking in tongues, prophesy, and the gift of healing, as well as such fruits as peace and joy. I came to argue that their "conversion" involved a process of rational "testing" based on evidence that included feelings and embodied experiences. Participants in the Charismatic Renewal forged their own religious identities, and in doing so chose commitment to the Catholic church, but on their own terms (Neitz 1987). My dissertation adviser, Michael Schudson, was not a sociologist of religion and turned me toward the developing area of sociology of culture. Borrowing from anthropologists' analyses of symbols, rituals and practices, I sought more adequate ways of understanding religion where meaning-making could not be understood separately from people's feelings, their embodied perceptions of pain and joy, their uncertainties and desires as they moved through their lives, interacting with others, including religious and other authorities. My own effort to understand the religious realities of ordinary people is consonant with the development in the sociology of religion in what is now called "lived religion" or "religion and everyday life."

Lived Religion: The Emergence of a Concept

David Hall is given credit for introducing the term, "lived religion" in the United States. The collection of essays, *Lived Religion in America*, published in 1997, brought the concept to a broader American audience. Based on a 1994 conference, the chapters feature historians of religion and a few ethnographers, all interested in refocusing the study of religion in order to take as central what ordinary people do in their religious lives. Hall's introduction and the first chapter by Robert Orsi serve as manifestos, positioning the case for lived religion as an analytic concept within academic fields, describing what it is not (not institutional religion, yet not the same as popular religion either), and arguing for the inadequacy of previous formulations.

This movement among scholars of religion to learn more about how religion is practiced and "the everyday thinking and doing of lay men and women" (Hall 1997: vii) in fact led to a rethinking of how scholars conceptualize religion itself. They began to think about religion as always in process, changing over time, and they paid more attention to people's practices, contextualized in space and time. Thus these scholars started to move away from seeing religious institutions as timeless or universal. Although it may at first seem counter-intuitive, looking at religion as people live it in their everyday lives gave less support to declensionist narratives: when one moves beyond adherence to institutions as the indicator, rather than seeing religion as disappearing under modernity, religion – as practices – appears to be proliferating.

By choosing to use the term "lived religion," Hall was attempting to move the field of Religious Studies away from dualistic categories of "popular religion" set in opposition to "official religion" (Hall 1997: viii–ix; cf. Orsi 1997: n. 10). Hall points to authors who enhanced our awareness of "popular religion" as a space not necessarily authorized by the institutional church but where lay "men and women enjoyed a certain measure of autonomy; here they became actors in their own right, fashioning (or refashioning) religious practices in accordance with local circumstances" (1997: viii). Yet, historically this binary reflected a high-low distinction, embedded in the field, in which "official religion" was authoritative and "real," in contrast to popular religion, which was presented as constituted by unofficial and even degraded forms. For some scholars today the term "popular religion" is tainted by associations with racist and colonial writings. For Hall, framing the object of study as "lived religion" breaks with this oppositional framing.

In his introduction, Hall also notes the significance of the idea of practice for researchers focusing on "lived religion." Although various ways of thinking about "practice" have a long history in western thought, the term gained new usages among scholars in the 1980s. Talking about practice came to be a way of recognizing both the regulatory effects of habitual ways of doing things and, at the same time, the possibility of innovation. Practice theorists (Bourdieu 1977; Hays 1994; Ortner 1984, 2006) argued that even with iterative activities, the meanings of the activities can change, at times leading to change in action, and that this is especially

likely when the context of the activity changes. For researchers of religion, newly attuned to looking at what ordinary people do, the emerging conceptualizations of practice helped scholars reframe debates about structure and agency and "join in the broader debates among contemporary intellectuals about the nature and limits of autonomy within the disciplinary confines of culture" (Orsi 1997: 14).

While Hall is credited with introducing the idea of lived religion to social scientists in the United States, he was also responding to broader shifts in intellectual discourse as well as changes in the activities of ordinary people and changes in the status of religious institutions. There were important precedents and fellow travelers in other disciplinary arenas who also developed formulations that have certain things in common with the emerging discourse on lived religion. Folklorists, too, were struggling with similar issues. Leonard Primano (1995), for example, argued for the concept of "vernacular religion" as a way to talk about located and contextualized practices of ordinary people in their everyday lives, without the binary implications of the folk/official religion categories.

There is also the French concept of "*religion veçue*" or lived religion. This tradition began in the 1940s partly out of pastoral concerns and fears of declining religiosity. In response, Gabriel de Bras and the researchers following him sought to map quantitatively the religious activities of ordinary people. Under his research program, a sociology of religion developed attuned to the geographic and historical factors explaining differences in everyday religious practices primarily among Catholics in France. In her review of this tradition, Danièle Hervieu-Léger describes the evolving attempts to understand the regulative and normative aspects of institutional and presumably uniform religion in relation to multiple, relatively autonomous local practices. Parallel to my own observations in the United States, Hervieu-Léger observed that any understanding of these relatively autonomous religious practices outside of the institutional church in France in terms of their premodern status as folk religion or as remnants of "primitive" religions was profoundly disrupted in the late 1970s by "the explosive development usually referred to as the 'the new religious movement', a development that provoked reconsideration of the religious production occurring within modernity itself" (1997: 25). Hervieu-Léger shows how an understanding of lived religion similar to that being developed by religious studies scholars in the United States emerged, one that questioned the association of divergent practices with folk traditions.

Hervieu-Léger's studies of the new religious movement began in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in France. As in the United States, she saw urban, educated people in France drawn into the movement. While societal institutions secularized, people still engaged in a search for meaning. In modern society, Hervieu-Léger argues, religion is located in the individual. In her book *Religion as a Chain of Memory* (1993 [published English in 2000]), Hervieu-Léger also argued for a new framing of how social scientists think about religion and modernity. She suggested we shift from traditional ways of thinking about religion in terms of subscribing to a particular set of beliefs to understanding religion as constituted in the act of believing. Borrowing from Maurice Halbwachs's work on collective memory (1980), she defines religion as "an ideological, practical and symbolic system through which

consciousness, both individual and collective, of belonging to a particular chain of belief is constituted, maintained, developed, and controlled" (2000:82). However, she sees collective memory itself as unstable and problematic. She argues that in modern, secular countries memory is attenuated: modern people suffer "amnesia." Conceptualizing "religion" in this way allows for a range of relationships between individual believers and authoritative interpretations of a religious tradition, while at the same time suggesting ways that individual meaning-making is dependent on the vitality of the collective.

Current Work on Lived Religion in American Sociology

Two recent publications illustrate the scope of the field in the United States. One is Meredith McGuire's book, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (2008). McGuire brings together her wide reading of the literature of lived religion along with copious examples from years of fieldwork in the United States on healing practices and on Mexican American religious practices to challenge the reader to reconsider how we as scholars have constructed boundaries between sacred and profane in various times and places, including the contemporary United States. She wants to provoke her readers to reconsider where the sacred is located, the nature of divine power, the focus of individuals religious expression, and the ways we think about authenticity of religious tradition and group identity (2008: 22). The second book is *Everyday Religion*, edited by Nancy Ammerman, based on a conference she organized in 2003. She brought to the table a dozen scholars with "dispatches from the field" (2007: 4) examining how religion is interwoven with activities taking place outside of religious institutions. The volume raises questions about what we define as religion and the repercussions of defining a particular activity as religious or not religious. This body of work asks us as scholars to expand the boundaries of what we consider as "religion" beyond the institutionalized forms. Specifically it raises issues about the divide between religion and spirituality, between the spiritual and the material aspects of religion, the universal *vs* the local, the local in relation to the global, and dominant versus outsider locations.

Spirituality

In recent years we have seen both academic and popular efforts to distinguish between "spirituality" and "religion" (Roof 1999). In popular discourse, people sometimes choose to call themselves "spiritual" as a way of distancing themselves from institutionally based religion. For many scholars, too, "religion" is associated with institutionalized belief and expressions, and "spirituality" with individually selected assortments of beliefs and practices. Yet for some scholars, the two forms are not necessarily oppositional or exclusive. Drawing examples from medieval

Christianity and from popular religious practices, McGuire suggests that rather than spirituality being a new and aberrant form, these two forms of religious practice have often co-existed. As an example of how an understanding of lived religion can offer a significant shift in perspective, McGuire revisits "Sheilaism," first reported by Bellah and colleagues in *Habits of the Heart* (1985). They introduce eclectic individual religion through their presentation of "Sheila Larson," a woman who no longer attends church, but who describes her personal blend of beliefs and practices as a faith that is very important to her. In the interview context, she calls it "Sheilaism." Nostalgia for a past, culturally hegemonic, New England Protestantism permeates *Habits*, and the authors clearly regard Sheilaism with dismay. For them it is an indicator of what has been lost. McGuire provides a way of reconsidering Sheila and her "individual religion," finding in *Habits*' text the evidence that Sheila's religion comes out of a personal crisis, "mind –body-spirit experiences of illness and healing" (2008: 151). Because of Bellah's team's narrow focus on belief, they failed to understand Sheila's religion. McGuire's own work on holistic healing practices – reported in this book as well as in her other publications – helps us to ask different questions about the activities of people like Sheila Larson. In the vignettes from her own interviews that McGuire presents in her book, we see that such expressions of individual spirituality are not necessarily a retreat to the private sphere as Bellah and his colleagues assumed. Rather, the people McGuire interviewed both draw on an array of cultural resources and show high levels of caring for and commitment to others.

With very different evidence, Ammerman also makes the argument that lived religion is not exclusive of institutional religion. In a recent report on data from her current project, she finds that:

> [S]piritual experiences are institutionally shaped … The stronger a person's ties to a religious institution, the more likely they are to talk about spiritual experiences and meanings in ways that take God to be an actor in the story. They are also more likely to engage in practices and activities, created by their institutions, which help them seek spiritual encounters and growth. . . Spirituality is often an intentional part of their lives, and whether intentional or not, the religious community provides the terms and the techniques (2010: 157–58).

In this article, Ammerman also reports many ways that her informants presented narratives of "spirituality" and "religion" across public and private lives, dealing with metaphysical and material subjects of their everyday experience.

Materiality

Researchers studying lived religion have also asked scholars to consider the materiality of religion, including the objects associated with religious devotion and spiritual practices that material forms. Lynn Davidman's unsynagogued Jews in the northeastern United States, for example, report building a Jewish identity around food and a contemporary observation of Shabbat – one interviewee reported that she

and her family ate pizza for Friday night dinner (2007: 58). McGuire reminds us that the bodily aspects of popular religious practices are an important aspect of how religious experience is produced (2008: 56).

Robert Orsi's work on American Catholics explores how the sacred is made visible in the experiences of the body. He argues, "things do not exhaust the materiality of religion." In his studies of Catholics in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century he asks "how the realness of the world as enacted in ritual is carried over into ongoing everyday life" (2005:74). His studies of various devotional practices show in fierce detail how religion becomes real and substantial in the lives of individuals, through processes that are not always benign, safe or comfortable (2005: 108).

Locality

For many of us who embarked on our studies of religion as ethnographers, a defining aspect of lived religion is that it is "local." Borrowing from Geertz and others who argued for the need for "local knowledge" as opposed to "grand theory"(1983), we looked for the ways that particular people in particular places interpreted their worlds and found religious meaning, expressed in particular practices. Space, place, time all became important aspects of religion in need of scholarly attention. Studies like Wendy Cadge's work on Theravada Buddhism in the United States, for example, show how the same religious tradition can look very different in different places (2005).

Yet what is "local" today may not be defined in the traditional geographical terms. As we can see in a number of studies, the understandings of lived religion that we are developing in regard to relatively autonomous local practices may also apply to groups that lack face-to-face communication but know each other through an Internet site or shared participation in a religious market. Some scholars of lived religion are exploring how globalization is changing how people understand the local. Lynn Schofield Clark (2007) and Mia Lovheim (2007) both study adolescents whose religious understandings are constructed through cultural resources other than traditional religious institutions – the mass media for Clark and Internet discussions for Lovheim. We may find it useful to think about how these sites foster the development of local practices in ways that are similar to – and different from – geographically bounded sites.

Robert Wuthnow's *Boundless Faith* demonstrates the changing meaning of local in a globalizing world where local congregations are providing ways for members to practice their faith through activities extend beyond the local – congregations sponsoring a refugee family or a sister church in another country, for example. Wuthnow also documents the new trend for individuals to go abroad for short term mission trips: he suggests that an astonishing 20–25% of church goers may be involved in such a trip in their lifetimes, the effects of which may be greater for the visiting Americans, who often return seeing both the United States and other cultures in a new light, than for sites they visit (2009: 171–185). These activities,

while based in local congregations, yet they can facilitate individuals crossing geographic and cultural boundaries. While a strength of the research on lived religion has been its attention to place, it is important for researchers to be open to the ways that place may extend beyond the local.

Religious Outsiders

As we have seen, the concept of "lived religion" in part developed out of the desire to get away from hierarchical constructions that privileged "official" or institutional religion over popular or folk beliefs and practices. Yet that tension is still in evidence, if only in the tendency to see lived religion in the activities of religious "others" – in places and spaces outside of the dominant culture. It can be difficult to see that it is possible that those who adhere to the dominant religion may also live their religion. Ammerman's analysis of the "Golden Rule" Christians (1997) is one example of this kind of work.

The emerging investigation of lived religion has been part of a process of legitimizing the study of religion outside of institutional forms. It has supported the study of spirituality and of local and material forms practiced by non-elites and outsiders. This has the potential for opening up how we see religion in the world; at the same time, it is important that we not limit our study of lived religion by restricting our conceptualization of it to one side of a set of binary oppositions. I submit that the essential core of the concept is that we see religion as practices located in space and time, and it was often the study of outsiders that provided the material for pushing our thinking, yet it is not necessary that this be local in a geographic sense or that the practitioners of lived religion must be outsiders.

Lived Religion: Toward the Future

When I started to review this literature one question that emerged for me is "Where are the men?" Men are present in the meditation centers and yoga classes, but just as in congregations, men are likely to be leaders in these alternative institutions, and less likely to show up in the studies of seekers. On the one hand, this is consistent with denominational religious life where men are likely to be leaders and women likely to be supportive followers. But still, I wonder if there is something in the way that we have conceptualized lived religion (as private and often domestic) that leads us to the practices of women. If we are looking primarily at the activities of women, then we need to be careful not to use gender-neutral language when we are describing the experiences of a particular group (women). However, we might also think about situations where we find men describing stereotypically masculine experiences in very similar terms as those used in other contexts to talk about a spiritual experience, but perhaps without using the term "spiritual." Thinking about this

question, I recall a colleague's description of riding on his motorcycle that evoked for me other descriptions I have read of "spiritual experiences." When does engaging in (stereotypically male) risky activities foster embodied practices which look like lived religion, even when the participants might scoff at the term? For example, how could conceptualizing it as lived religion help us understand the practices of some gang members of protecting themselves with tattoos of the Virgin Mary? (An example is the photograph of the Virgin of Guadalupe "covering" the back of the Latino gang member showering in a Texan prison captured by Danny Lyon, reproduced in Orsi 2005: 71).

A different example of lived religion in a public realm is Richard Callahan's study *Work and Faith in the Kentucky Coal Fields: Subject to Dust*. Callahan draws connections between embodied work experience and religious idioms and shows how those religious idioms were transferred to other environments (in particular labor organizing activities). In this Appalachian community Callahan documents the participation of both church members and nonmembers in religious activities, union activity and mine work. He brings our attention to the particularities of place: for example, how with the coming of the mining industry at the turn of the century, the names of towns changed from local referents – settlers, landmarks, bible characters – to the names of mines and owners from outside the area, and he helps us imagine that shift as part of a major transition in the lives of peoples who had, until turn of century, nearly all engaged in subsistence farming. He uses the material from oral histories and folklore to show how the familiarity with death, as well as folk complaints such as "nerves" demonstrate an experience of the body's limits that demanded religious articulation. Callahan contends that for these men who engaged in hard manual labor, the body was the primary source of authentic religious knowledge concerning the state of the soul.

This focus on the body leads Callahan to suggest that healing was as important as speaking in tongues in the holiness and Pentecostal religions of the miners and their families. He argues that "holiness believers took up the broken body as a medium of encountering and engaging with the divine, supernatural power, that is as a sacrament," (2009: 145). Callahan counters the claim that the religious practices were an "escape" by showing the connections between the miners' daily lives and the religious practices; reality, he argues was not so easy to escape. He argues that the influence of the religion extended beyond those who were members of the churches because revivals and camp meetings involved whole communities. Furthermore, when he turns to examine the unionizing activities of the 1930s, he shows how the religious culture was foundational to their understanding of the secular activity of joining a union. The union provided a new forum for voicing their spiritual concerns of survival and health under the altered material conditions of work in the mines and moving from subsistence farming into the capitalist economy. Religion also provided limits on their participation – early support for the communist National Miners Union turned to rejection when local leaders went to national union meetings in Chicago and discovered that that the communist based union truly advocated atheism. Callahan shows religion and the physical experience of work interpenetrating in the daily lives of the miners.

Other examples of lived religion in the public sphere include studies of the practices of protesters who use a religious frame to motivate their work for justice. A recent study of such an organization, Interfaith Worker Justice, revealed how this group of people brought their faith commitments into working on labor issues. For members of the organization, it was not just a matter of using religious rhetoric to make moral claims, but work itself was defined as sacred. In taking this stance, members, living their religion in contexts outside of the churches, challenge the boundaries between private and public, sacred and profane (Lane 2010). McGuire also provides examples of the use of religious idioms in public protests, including a discussion of Ku Klux Klan rituals as lived religion, a chilling reminder that such uses are not necessarily progressive (2008: 116–117).

Conclusion

While the study of lived religion may have begun in an examination of religion outside of the domain of institutions, current scholarship has moved toward troubling that boundary. Indeed, Ammerman's findings regarding the degree to which institutionalized religion in fact supports everyday practice, raise questions about how lived religion will change if institutional religion weakens. While in many people's practice, lived religion overlaps with spirituality, they are not the same, insofar as lived religion is not necessarily private or internal. It is often practiced in public or in collective acts and understandings. We want to be open to the ways that people are sacralizing their daily lives, and to understand the various ways that people now are using religious/spiritual practices in their daily lives to connect to traditions (even invented ones). The concept of lived religion helps us as scholars of religion to be attentive to the actual realities of people's everyday practices as located in space and time.

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Chapter 5
Religious Lifestyles

Luigi Berzano

Lifestyles are a classic field of sociology: from Weber and Simmel, from the founders of the sociology of mass communication, through the researchers of the Chicago School, to their recent repositioning in the sociology of consumption and in the theories of Bourdieu, Giddens and – above all – in youth subculture scholars.

For some time, lifestyle analysis has also been enlivened by growing attention to the processes of personalization, aestheticization and stylization of daily life. In the same way the concept of lifestyle has been extended to embrace every form of self-expression: individualism and stylistic self-consciousness in the way of dressing, living, free time, *loisirs*, food, entertainment and, lastly, every activity of daily life. In a great deal of research on consumption, the search for a "lifestyle" indicates the desire of every individual to break out of the "gray conformism" of the mass consumption of decades past. However, in spite of the fact that lifestyles have become part of the language and interpretative models of social sciences, especially in studies on the condition of youth and emerging social groups, lifestyles are still an ambiguous concept because they are complex and transdisciplinary.

The aim of this chapter is to show, first, the typically vertical connotation of the classical sociology tradition which saw "lifestyles" as strictly depending on class stratification and standing, while also presenting current sociological interests that – without denying economic differentiation – claim a relative independence among the objective factors of stratification and life experience. Advanced modernism no longer recognizes fixed rules of vertical lifestyle reproduction, just as it no longer recognizes any rigid system of status attribution. Second, the chapter will formulate a lifestyles definition characterized by a particular intersubjective dimension, that is to say, the reproduction of lifestyles by horizontal means. In this definition, a lifestyle is a social form belonging to the "reciprocal actions" category; and insofar as it is a "reciprocal action," it is based on adhesion to or imitation of other "reciprocal

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actions" and binds individuals independently of their status belonging or ascribed belonging (cf. Berzano and Genova 2008). Third, the chapter will interrogate the relationship between lifestyle and religion based on the hypothesis that it is possible to interpret many religious forms (both individual and collective) as lifestyles, according to this definition. A religious lifestyle will therefore be defined as a set of practices to which an individual attributes a unified meaning shared by a group (community, spirituality), without its generative element or its validation being a pre-existent religious system.

The Classical Top-Down Connotation of Lifestyles

There has been a sociological tradition that has dealt with "lifestyles" as strictly dependent on the economic stratification of social classes, castes or similar forms of social and cultural status. In sociological theory the concept of lifestyle has often been close to that of class and social stratum, subject to the needs of social standing – status, prestige, distinction.

One of the first uses of the concept of lifestyle can be found in the sociology of Georg Simmel. In his early works, lifestyles are placed in the context of the interests of the principle of social differentiation, hence of the relations between objective and subjective culture. In *Social Differentiation*, Simmel analyzes relations between the extension of groups (social circles) and the development of individuality (identities). Simmel writes that the level of the development of individuality increases with the widening of the social circle; at the same time the widening of a social group, which is at first internally homogenous, results in increasing the internal differentiation while augmenting the number of formations that are similar to those of another group. Simmel points out a general tendency whereby the more a group shows a distinctive character, the more individuals belonging to that group will resemble one another; while, by contrast, the less a group shows distinctive character, the more its individuals will posses distinctive lifestyles. Through his illuminating language, Simmel gives as an example the Quakers who "are individuals only in that which is common, but are socially bound in that which is individual" (1995: 59). To generalize, we could say that lifestyles have the double function of constituting a group, cementing its unity *ab intra*, and differentiating it *ad extra* from the others.

It is in a later period of his work that Simmel deals with the themes of individualization and differentiation, through which the individual tries to assert his or her own personality by means of qualitative differentiation, aimed at somehow attracting the attention of the social circle by playing on its sensitivity to differences. In the long sixth chapter of *The Philosophy of Money* – "The Lifestyle" – it is the monetary economy, by leveling the emotional life of metropolitan man, that creates an "objectivity of lifestyle … the only way open to man to achieve a relationship with things which is not dependent on the fortuitousness of the subject" (1989: 626).

It will be useful to refer this concept to the third point about spirituality. Objective culture – let's say "intra-religious spirituality" – is the one that is by now fixed and incorporated into the works of man, including behavior and routine practices, and as such it has become that which exists independently of the life of him who has produced it. On the other hand, subjective culture – extra-religious spirituality – is that produced by concrete individuals in their experiences and daily work. In a little-known paper by Simmel, the relationship between objective and subjective cultures is shown to be interdependent even if, in modern society, such a relationship is more and more divided between what is incorporated in objective culture and what is possible for the single individual. The distinctiveness of the contemporary individual's condition resides in this divergence between the *cognitive-value* dimension incorporated in objective culture and the dimension of individuals' single experiences (lifestyles). Simmel writes:

> Obviously subjective culture cannot exist without objective culture. Quite the reverse: objective culture may be partly independent of subjective culture insofar as "objects of culture" – whose availability is not fully taken advantage of by subjects for personal reasons – can be created. Particularly in periods of social complexity and extended division of labor, the accomplishments of objective culture come to constitute, so to speak, a kind of autonomous kingdom. And in truth, seeing the enormous increase in objective culture, into which the world of things is parceled among numberless workers, subjective culture *cannot* grow in the same way. At least up to now historical development has moved in this way towards an increasingly marked separation between objective culture production and the cultural level of individuals (cf. Jedlowski 1994: 94).

This contains, according to Simmel, all the discomfort and dissonance of modern culture, that is to say, man is more and more surrounded by things which he no longer automatically dominates. In this condition, man finds himself in an ever-increasingly reified world that recalls Marx's "goods/commodity fetishism." This objective world also transforms behavior and manners.[1]

We owe it to Weber to have used the concept of lifestyle as a social form through which the prestige of a social group is expressed. To Weber, lifestyles develop, under certain material conditions, from choices of work, consumption, relaxation, alliances, friendship, associations (political party, club, sports club etc.), in the light of a common claimed perception and social consideration; hence, lifestyles are highly dependent on economic conditioning. Weber posits a close relationship between the religious beliefs, status and power structure of groups in society, noting that *status groups* make an effort to conserve and strengthen their current

[1] Among the authors who have amply developed this theme of dissonance, Arnold Gehlen (1990) writes that man's typically "non-specialized" nature makes him superior to other animals: "open to the world." The behavior of man can be placed between the two spheres of objective world and subjective world, with the possibility of reacting autonomously to his environment by means of selective choices. It is not by chance that a key concept in this tradition of thought is *contingency*. The post-modern condition marked by high contingency is that which most indicates a sense of limit and the situated nature of the individual.

lifestyle by keeping their social distance and excluding outsiders from economic opportunities.[2]

A more recent contribution to the study of lifestyles is that of Pierre Bourdieu, who positions himself at an equal distance from both the objectivist illusion (which considers the autonomous social structures impinging on social actors without taking into account their experiences or their behavior) and the subjectivist illusion (which attributes absolute autonomy to individuals without taking into account the material and cultural conditioning which limits their behavior). Bourdieu's structuralist constructivism resides in this non-dualistic vision between the objective and subjective dimensions (Bourdieu 1987: 147). The principal mechanism of production of the social world and the principle of historical action is situated in the rapport-relationship between the two states of the social "objective-*campus*" and the "subjective-*habitus*." The *habitus* concept in some ways resembles Parsons's interiorization of values and cultural models and the typification of Schütz, Berger and Luckmann. Yet on second thought, Bourdieu's theory still seems characterized by elements of structuralist determinism, since action occupies a subordinate position, limited to actualizing objectivated cultural schemes that have their ultimate roots in class structures (so Crespi 2003: 84 ff).

A last analytical proposal – also strongly deterministic – was developed by authors from the University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies (CCCS). Here subcultures were again understood as symbolic-cultural forms of resistance that developed starting from the principal cleavages present in society, especially from class distinctions. According to this analysis, subcultures and their lifestyles were forms of class conflict confronting a mainstream identified as dominant. Even the lifestyles of spectacular subcultures were equally interpreted as deterministic models because they were directly opposed to the mainstream. In the following section we shall examine the criticisms that have been directed toward this analytic school and its proposal of more fluid models, especially connected with the development of collective identities.

The Interactionist Reproduction of Lifestyles

Are lifestyles today freer and more autonomous, hence implying their own cognitive-value dimension – i.e., a personal dimension of attitudes, aspirations and identity construction? In this view, the individual, rather than adopt a lifestyle from tradition and the ascribed cognitive-value system, turns his own lifestyle into an immediate

[2] Yet the same Weber points out more than once in *The Protestant Ethic* that all the reformation doctrines tried to bridge the gap between doctrine and everyday behavior. Indeed daily life proceeded with styles of life far from the exhortations of puritanical theologians. People's style of life was so different from the official ethical line that places of "ordered disorder" were set aside, where, periodically, individuals' otherness and transgressiveness could explode.

life project in which he invests his own individuality, his own "being present" ("being there"), his own particular appearance, dress and physical aptitudes.

Recalling the concept of anomy as introduced by Durkheim in *The Division of Labor in Society*, we may say that it has caused disorder in the field of lifestyles. Rigid systems of attribution of status no longer exist: rules of behavior for oneself and the others are becoming less and less clear. Attributed personal identity, fixed once and for all, is less relevant – it is rather a personal project to be realized through the effort of many years or even all of one's life. Life itself becomes a biography that the individual perceives as a – sometimes laborious – construction by means of choices and trial-and-error. Even in the area of consumption, the reasons for buying are less status and distinction. In *homo consumericus* the "Veblen effect" can be seen less in showy consumption (aimed at social esteem and "being seen"); consumption is based on experience and emotion (aimed at pleasure and personal happiness). Thus theories of consumption that consider lifestyles as behavioral synecdoche – that is, as useful indicators for classifying groups of consumers, internally homogenous and differentiated one from the other – are less convincing. Some recent authors have made meaningful contributions to all these elements.

Joffre Dumazedier was the founder of *loisir* sociology. However, in his latest writings, introducing an analysis of *loisirs*, in reality he has presented a new concept that is very close to our idea of lifestyle. Both *loisirs* and lifestyles are personal ways of organizing daily life, either alone or in groups (see Dumazedier 1972: 273 ff). *Loisirs* are the means and content of *loisir* (see Livolsi in Dumazedier 1993: 9–19). According to the French sociologist, *loisirs* are not mechanically produced but are formed by their own initiation methods, including awareness of its characteristics and what they imply in terms of norms and rules. To this extent, *loisirs* also demand effort, self-education, choices. We may go so far as to say that in some cases *loisirs* represent a new cognitive-value dimension in an environment where it is lacking. Dumazedier's contribution through his empirical and theoretical studies is innovative precisely because he recognizes that it is in the individual's quest for his own lifestyle that *loisirs* acquire their own importance and indicate their own system of values. Dumazedier's indication is important both for its analysis of lifestyles in those contexts in which a greater amount of available free time, increased possibility of choices and the more general phenomenon of the "revolution of growing expectations" augment an awareness of and taste for multiple ways of living, and also for its interpretation of *loisirs* as indicators and containers of their own cognitive-value dimension.

Another interesting model for analyzing the *structuration* of lifestyles is that of Anthony Giddens. The English sociologist proposes to hold together both the active element deriving from the experience of the social actors and the dimension of *routinization* and *structuration* that influence individual and collective behavior (cf. Giddens 1991). In this dual model of lifestyles, the sum total of cultural products and rules (belonging, education, knowledge, techniques, etc.) is considered a *resource*, on which social actors draw automatically (routines) to respond creatively to unexpected events. An individual's lifestyles therefore derive both

from the form of action and transformation of the individual's conditions of life and from the result of these life conditions.[3]

According to Giddens, the constitution of a lifestyle depends on four factors: First, in a post-traditional context an individual must choose among multiple options, and when traditional options are lacking, the individual himself or herself must invent his or her own. Today the individual lives in the context that Peter Berger calls a "pluralization of the life world."[4] Every life circle is segmented and differentiated. Lifestyles are an expression and, sometimes, a consequence of different environments and places. Their transformation is, in other cases, a means of solving the cognitive dissonance in which individuals and groups find themselves. Second, over a lifetime different lifestyles may be developed according to the context in which one lives. Giddens defines these segments of spatial-temporal activities in an individual's overall activities as "lifestyle sectors." Third, the prevalence of mass-media experience also influences the pluralism of choices and lifestyles. Electronic media in particular tamper with the "situational geography" of social life, continually creating new similarities and new differences, as a result of which even the traditional connection between "physical environment" and "social situation" has been undermined.[5] Fourth, lifestyles are multiplying in a context of greater uncertainty. The methodical doubt of contemporary society confers conditional ("until we find out more") trust on everybody, both individuals and institutions. Abstract systems that have permeated daily life offer multiple choices rather than rigid guidelines or recipes for action.

Finally, there are biographical phases, such as adolescence and early adulthood, in which a distinctive lifestyle choice gives the chance to indicate one's "in" group as distinct from that which is "out." Giddens cites the example of a woman who, as soon as she finds out she's pregnant, adopts a lifestyle that is consonant with her new condition (clothes, food, planning of daily timetable, attitudes), confirming the interpretation of lifestyles as being rites of passage through which the individual separates himself/herself from one lifestyle in order to embrace another.

Also in Robert Merton's theory of reference groups we can find elements similar to those that compose our lifestyles. Merton's theory of reference groups explains

[3] This principle is the thesis of a classic work on style, A. L. Kroeber's *Style and Civilizations* (1963). This sentence was placed on the exergue by Kroeber, who defined style as a "super-organic" tendency of culture. The great civilizations were characterized by "super-styles," "styles of style," and/or "total lifestyles."

[4] It was above all Berger's co-authored volume *The Homeless Mind* (1973) that highlighted the pluralization of life worlds and the biographical possibilities that characterize the modern subject.

[5] All the phenomenological models have made significant contributions to the clarification of relations between social and subjective complexity, starting with Schütz's subjective "multiple realities," i.e., "orders of reality in contrast or competition with one another: … daily life, the world of our imagination, of art, of science, etc." All experiences in the circle of each of these worlds constitute "finite provinces of meaning," each of which has its own particular lifestyle (Schütz 1945; cf. Bellah et al. 1996: 99 ff).

the identification/mimesis mechanism of behavior.[6] For an individual to be related to a group, even if it is far removed from his daily life, means imitating its behavior, tastes, attitudes and "immediate reference values," that is, imitate its lifestyles, both in order to be recognized by that group and to indicate to other groups the one to which one wishes to belong. Sometimes such lifestyles announce common belonging, as happens in forms of "anticipatory socialization." Reference groups are among the main sociocultural agents influencing lifestyles. Fabris (1965) has analyzed the performative rather than attributive nature of lifestyles in the area of consumption. Attention paid to performative aspects tends to consider the mechanisms of (conditioned) choice of lifestyles, and therefore mediation between the orientative social representations presented by lifestyles and the processes of transactive adoption, conditioned by pre-existing value systems. Analysis of reference groups helps us to understand how identification with certain groups to which one does not belong in reality (and with the consequent lifestyles) comes about.

Once again we find similar elements in the authors who have recently criticized the CCCS and its interpretation of subcultures as a form of resistance to the dominant mainstream. Within research built upon this criticism, the rigidity of cultures and their being above all forms of resistance have given way to more fluid portraits, connected principally with the development of collective identities. This research has referred to a less structuralist and more interactivist image of the processes of formation of subcultures and lifestyles. In this research there appear conceptual proposals built around the notions of tribes, scenes, *bünden, milieux,* and others.[7]

Partly on the basis of agreement among the authors cited, we may formulate a lifestyle definition characterized by its particular intersubjective dimension. A lifestyle is a social form typical of human interaction. To extend the hypothesis, a lifestyle is a social form belonging to the category of "reciprocal actions" – and insofar as it is a "reciprocal action" a lifestyle is built on the basis of adhesion to or imitation of other "reciprocal actions" and binds individuals independently of the institutionalization of their relationships. In a minor hypothesis, lifestyles imply their own cognitive-value dimension – i.e., a dimension of attitudes, aspirations and identity building.

These two hypotheses form a definition of lifestyles characterized by their own cognitive-value dimension that is no longer produced vertically (from values → lifestyles) but horizontally (from lifestyles → lifestyles → lifestyles). Rather than adopt a lifestyle from tradition and the prevailing cognitive-value system, individuals make their lifestyles an immediate life-project in which they invest their own individuality, their own "being there," their own peculiarities of appearance, dress, of physical idiosyncrasies and affections. Attention paid to a "tailor made" lifestyle

[6] The concept of "reference group" was first used by Hyman (1968), together with "reference individual." However, it was Merton (1968) who built up a theory of the relationship between behavior and reference groups.

[7] For this analysis see Genova (in Berzano and Genova 2008: 105–133); cf. Kellner 1992; Reimer 1995: 124–125; Bennett 1999: 605; Kahn-Harris 2000; Miles 2000; Chaney 2001.

involving all ages and all environments – while it presents the negative dimension of assembly – also implies the positive dimension of effort, risk and personal participation.

Religious Lifestyles

The aim of this third section is to show to what extent the lifestyle concept, as it has been defined here, represents an analytical category that is of interest also for research on forms of belonging, of participation, of expression and of building religious identity. All the research has one point in common: the affirmation that many religious practices are reproduced and justified with horizontal modes. For example, a great deal of research follows Grace Davie's principle of "believing without belonging" (1994) to indicate a greater autonomy of religious behavior. Here, rather, we recall Wilhelm Dilthey's *Critique of Historical Reason* (1982) and his concepts of *Erlebnis/Erfahrung*, constituting them as a typology of two historical phases.

Erfahrung is the accumulation of experiences, that is, objective experience. It is what remains in movement: "it is a present past whose events have been combined and can be remembered" (Koselleck 1986: 304). The word derives from the verb *Erfahren*: to pass through. *Erfahrung* is a tradition that expands in time, a process in which memory is active as the faculty that connects diverse experiences in a continuum that makes sense. *Erfahrung* is possible only when there is accumulated experience that aids the individual throughout life. It is a gift that sediments slowly and whose carriers *par excellence* in the past were "the elders." Individual past is joined to collective past. When this experience is crushed in the present, because the past does not teach anything anymore, then it turns to the *Erlebnis*, in the singular sense, to the consumption of immediate experience. Thus *Erfahrung* indicates experience as elaboration, exercise and experimentation of new possibilities. In the context of religions, *Erfahrung* generates practices that are conscious of belonging to a long tradition that is the fruit of accumulation, both in individual and collective lives, not so much single data as a past which is synthesized and accessible. The practices of *Erfahrung* perpetuate a specific heritage of faith.

> *Erfahrung* is possible only when there is an accumulative experience which sediments slowly in time, which helps one on life's path. When this experience is crushed by the present, because the past no longer teaches us anything or because our expanding horizon of expectations restricts room for experience, then we aim at *Erlebnis*, immediate enjoyment of sensations, consuming experience in a kind of rapid flash at the moment when one is hungry for experience (Bodei 1991: 114).

Erlebnis is experience lived in all its immediacy and distinctiveness. It is being alive (*leben*) while something happens. It is a precise act of consciousness, a vivid *Dasein*. *Erlebnis* is always a subjective fact in which there is no "collective memory" for the individual to rejoin. Indeed the memory of *Erlebnis* does not grow in the fertile soil of collective memory: it is typical of young generations who find themselves living in a situation where the substance of the available culture is

constantly deprived of meaning by change.[8] The word *Erfahrung* is older than *Erlebnis*, and the history of the two words means the more general process in which the traditional society precedes the modern one. *Erfahrung* is becoming progressively less relevant in the modern age, which presents fewer of the historical conditions that made it possible. The atrophy of the modern age, as described by Walter Benjamin (1962), refers to *Erfahrung* understood as an ancient tradition, as memory, as the past synthesized and rendered available for the present. Once upon a time this happened not only with the support of the force of habit, but also of a symbolic order guaranteed by a ritual system.

The notion of the modern age is conceived at the historical moment when an era is recognized by the fact that change is the rule. Modernity reduces the value of experience, deprives it of stability, and so continually introduces new – unknown – elements. In this way, because of the complexity of these unknown factors, even the present is removed from our experience (cf. Koselleck 1986: 25–26).

In the field of recent western religious phenomena, there was a particular turning point from *Erfahrung* to *Erlebnis* in the decades after 1960, between the Second Vatican Council and the protests of 1968. It is in that period of accelerated modernization that we can see – with reference to the Catholic Church – the decline of the centrality of the traditional parish that, apart from effective participation, continued to keep alive the Catholic *long tradition* within which people recognized themselves. A lot of research has documented the two elements that make up our lifestyles: the first is reproduction by means of interaction modalities from forms of belonging, faith, practice, interests and religious tastes; the second is the principle of validation of one's own lifestyle in a way that is no longer vertical, deriving from a historical religion, but horizontal, deriving from a group or movement or from oneself. The claim of individual autonomy, which undermines traditional authority, does not however prevent one from basing one's lifestyle on other sources of validation.

Some research already carried out in Italy – which employed the categories of "implicit religion," "background religion," "multiple forms of pluralism," "new religiousness and spirituality" – has demonstrated the presence of religious *lifestyles* which are independent not only of socio-economic status but also of the personal primary/institutional religious belonging of single individuals.[9] In this meaning *lifestyles* are sources of identity and symbolic *autonomous* codes of identification in a group or movement (*autonomous* because they are not *necessarily* dependent on the original, founding cognitive-value dimension of the group or movement). Incidentally, the very identity of individuals no longer depends solely on one's profession or occupation but is increasingly actively built on the basis of autonomous symbolic and cultural resources.

[8] This is the situation interpreted by Berger and Luckmann (1966: 140 ff) in terms of "cognitive pluralism."

[9] The reference here is to Italian scholars who, in numerous works, have documented this transformation of religious life in Italy, most notably Salvatore Abruzzese, Stefano Allievi, Carmellina Canta, Alessandro Castegnaro, Vincenzo Cesareo, Roberto Cipriani, Federico D'Agostino, Italo De Sandre, Giuseppe di Gennaro, Luca Diotallevi, Franco Garelli, Giuseppe Giordan, Gustavo Guizzardi, Renzo Guolo, Clemente Lanzetti, Pino Lucà Trombetta, Stefano Martelli, Arnaldo Nesti, Vito Orlando, Enzo Pace, and Luigi Tomasi.

The advent of what today is called "psychological modernity" was a central factor in the formation of lifestyles. "Psychological modernity implies questioning – in the name of individual autonomy as well as indefeasible subjective rights – of all forms of authority which impose norms on conscience and behavior. It is the collapse of the 'fiction of continuity' that constituted the symbolic armor of that civilization. For centuries the parish was the memory of society *par excellence*" (Hervieu-Léger 1996: 205–206).

This concept reminds us of Maurice Halbwachs's classic works on memory (1950; 1952), according to which, with the advent of capitalism and technology two tendencies are began: the *extension and homogenization of memory* and the *fragmentation of memory ad infinitum*. In the former tendency there is a progressive subordination of all spheres of social life to the productive one, with an accompanying development of prevalently technical, functionalized and neutral memory – memory, that is to say, which is superficial, flat, with minimal normative and creative skills. This loss of depth of collective memory is a result of the mass-media apparatus in our time whereby the superfluity of available information at every moment cancels all previous information: in the eyes of a television viewer a tragedy wipes out all previous tragedies. "The immediacy of communication focuses on the event and makes the narration's relational nature disappear. The complexity of the world, testified to by the enormous mass of available information atomized in such a way, has less and less need for the quasi-spontaneous order guaranteed by the collective memory which identifies for us an internal need" (Hervieu-Léger 1996: 199). In memory fragmentation, the functional dissociation of the experiences of every individual and group, closed in its own sphere of specialization, makes access to a unified memory difficult. "Modern breaking up of spatial, temporal and institutional space implies the breaking up of memories, which the speed of social and cultural change destroy almost as fast as they are produced. The collective memory of modern society is a memory of crumbs" (Hervieu-Léger 1996: 200).

What happens in situations where religion "has its memory in crumbs" – that is, when atrophy of the *long religious traditions* of *Erfahrung* occurs? It is in this context that religious lifestyles are reproduced as religious behavior based on *short religious traditions*. If the identity and self-definition of the individual in time, based on a cognitive-value dimension in which can be seen (i.e. in a historical, ethnic, ideological, religious tradition) that religious lifestyles are "memory-less" because they are based on a "short tradition"; that is to say, they comprise a set of values and behavior based on the most immediate symbols, aimed at revealing to others more highly-visible features.[10] The *mysticism* of which Robert N. Bellah and his colleagues

[10] Hervieu-Léger (2003) identifies six separate paths among young people for identifying with Christianity. These paths, in their means of reproduction, have some elements in common with the concept of lifestyle. The six types (affective Christianity, heritage Christianity, humanitarian Christianity, political Christianity, humanistic Christianity, aesthetic Christianity) "do not automatically result in the affirmation of an identity which conforms to the criteria required by the ecclesiastical institution, or a community integration capable of guaranteeing definite stabilization of the religious reference to which the young people have appealed" (pp. 65–66).

speak in *Habits of the Heart* is related to what has been said, inasmuch as it indicates the most appropriate sensitivity of our society. The "mystics" of whom Bellah writes are today's religious individualists who speak of themselves as if they were gifted with *spiritual sensitivity* rather than religious sensitivity:

> This mysticism has no effective social discipline … because of its radical religious individualism…. A lot of the freshness and vitality of American religion can be found in forms of the "new sensitivity" that has made some social contribution …: its intrinsic volatility and weakness, its extreme weakness in social and political organization, and above all its particular form of compromise with the world (Bellah et al. 1996: 309–10).

Thus we can re-introduce our initial identification of a religious lifestyle by defining it as a set of practices to which the individual assigns a unitary sense, which is presented as a model shared by a group (community, spirituality), and whose validation and generative elements were not a pre-existent religious system.

We can analyze the four elements of this definition: *First*: the practices are social activities habitually carried out by a person or a group (cf. Ansart 1999). Therefore it suggests the idea of actions characterized by – often daily – frequency. Although these actions do not derive constantly from an explicitly reflexive process, nevertheless they depend on individual choice and, in the individual's perception, have special significance. This does not mean, however, that within the lifestyle parallel values, attitudes and sensitivities[11] cannot emerge as distinctive features. *Second:* The individual attributes a unitary *sense* to the practices of a lifestyle.[12] This does not mean that he or she reconnects the lifestyle with the values and judgments that are extraneous to it, but that he or she relates to it as an organic cultural form. A unitary sense, therefore, insofar as the multiple practices considered as a whole may be read through the same interpretative model and in a parallel way insofar as each of these practices has a reciprocal relationship with the others – and only within this network of relationship can acquire full meaning. *Third,* a lifestyle as a sociological concept is shared by a collective. So if it is true that in one sense we can believe that each individual really develops his or her own lifestyle, we may speak of lifestyles only where we can observe a sharing of such practices and of the unitary sense given to them by a collective.[13] *Fourth,* the generative element of a lifestyle is not to be found either in a pre-existing cognitive-value framework or in a predetermined socio-structural condition. Therefore, on the one hand, we cannot consider a lifestyle as precipitated

[11] Chaney (1996: 8) has defined the concept of sensitivity as "a way of responding to events, actions or phenomena which possesses a particular system of consistency insofar as in identifying a sensitivity it is possible to explain or predict responses to new situations."

[12] Within the present interpretative model, we can adopt a distinction between "sense" and "meaning." Whereas "meaning" refers to the expressive communicative content of every practice, and therefore to the individual's interpretation of every lifestyle component, "sense" refers to the same individual's interpretation of the totality of practices that make up the lifestyle, and therefore the lifestyle considered as a whole.

[13] For this reason Reimer (1995: 125) writes that "the analysis of lifestyles should show similarities and differences between groups of individuals rather than similarities and differences between individuals."

by a religion. On the other hand, we cannot consider lifestyles as cultural expressions of the individual's social position, which may indeed influence their development, especially by assuming the form of a framework of possibilities and opportunities that cannot account for it, since they do not represent its generative element. In general, neither a lifestyle nor its basis can be found by looking outside itself.

Conclusions

On the basis of the schematic reconstruction in the previous pages of some general elements, five final formulations can be indicated to verify how the concept of lifestyle as defined here is useful to interpret religious behavior.

Lifestyles and the Breakdown of Church Belonging

The hypothesis is that individuals can adopt lifestyles of a religious kind (behavior/practices, participation, involvement in beliefs, declared identity) that are independent from their religious belonging. In such cases lifestyles break up – or render irrelevant – these individuals' belonging to their religion. In this way we can understand "non-church religions," which is to say all those forms of expression that individuals and groups cultivate with regard to historical religions. It is the phenomenon of the individualization of the religious, today known variously as do-it-yourself religion, religious patchwork, religion *à la carte*, in which the idea of a religious free market of symbolic goods is united with that of individual, utilitarian and fluctuating behavior. It is therefore the phenomenon of new religious forms at the periphery of or outside historical religions, of the pluralism of religious experiences, of the perception of religious activity as a *loisir* activity in competition with other *loisir* activities. The religious individual chooses a lifestyle as he or she chooses a holiday, a profession, *loisirs*. In all of these forms the religious individual is ever less a passive participant in an institutional system of practices and ever more a strategic and interested moving force.

In this process of personalization and stylistic self-awareness, religious individuals and spirituality grow without a fixed religious *status*. All this does not mean the death of religion but rather the tendency of the individual to construct his or her religious-life project. Mass societies, then, nurture not only the gray conformism of which some commentators speak but also the game of individual differences. Once again Simmel's observation – on the imitation and differentiation functions of lifestyles, of adherence to the group and individual difference from the members of other groups – is relevant; as is his central interest in the relationship between subjective and objective culture. (It is in the metropolis, where objective culture dominates, that we find the stylization of interiority through which people try to express their own subjectivity).

This phenomenon also developed in other social fields after 1968 and which, with regard to social needs and citizens' rights, has been defined as a "revolution of rising expectations." This revolution also occurred in the area of religious needs, whose indicators we can find in new interests involving *transcendence* (the need for the sacred, a search, religiousness, a morality), *ethics* (genetic manipulation, sexuality, illness, environment, ethnic diversity) and *social issues* (the prevalence of the individualistic and selfish ego). The "revolution of rising religious expectations" has also affected sociologists' analytical models and research tools. Researchers' interest in religious forms that grow on the periphery of established religion and of strong, exclusive identities has increased. Also, hermeneutical research is more interested in lives, past and present personal experiences, and all those data that are compatible only with ethnography and qualitative research.

Lifestyles Between Erfahrung and Erlebnis

Historical established religions, like all institutions and traditions that have lasted a long time, tend toward *Erfahrung*. In *Erfahrung* individuals adapt to the cognitive-value system of their own church. Therein lies the force of what Pierre Bourdieu's theory defines as *habitus*, that is, a relatively stable set of principles, aptitudes and unconscious natural gifts that influence tastes and everyday habits. Bourdieu has borrowed the term *habitus* from scholastic theology: in the *Summa*, Thomas Aquinas dedicated numerous *quaestiones* to it in order to emphasize its structuring force in everyday behavior – as today it indicates the "plis" in Deleuze's thought (1988). The *habitus* reinforces customary stability.

In the history of all religions, lifestyles have always been dependent on *Erfahrung*, of which it became part through either a long process of socialization or a sudden, radical conversion. This does not impede the hypothesis that other lifestyles better represent the immediacy of *Erlebnis*. We can imagine that in thirteenth-century Assisi some young friars followed Francis not so much for the revolution of values that he announced but because of how he lived: in brotherly company, traveling through forests in the valleys of Umbria, dressing simply, founding monasteries in the most beautiful places in the region. This is the idea of *Erlebnis*.

Today this kind of lifestyle/*Erlebnis* is mobilizing all established historical religions. Let us take two examples. Sometimes an individual's lifestyle can be identified, by means of a personal choice, in the values and practices of the institution to which he or she belongs. It is as if the individual reawakened on his or her own the meaning and substance of the ancient tradition to which he or she belongs. This happens with born-again Christians and "conscious conversions" to one's own religion. In these cases we can find biographical turning points where individuals strongly re-identify with what is their own. This is also the phenomenon of *re-Islamicization* in which ethnic belonging to Islam is transformed into identity-belonging by choice and adherence to Islam as a "public religion." The process of *re-Islamicization* particularly regards emigrants coming from countries with Islamic

traditions for whom – when they are away from their original context – Islam needs to be re-examined and reconsidered. In this case, too, the reconstruction of the identity connection takes place along an itinerary in which the individual passes from attributed belonging to voluntary, subjective belonging.

In another case, lifestyles generate a new cognitive-value dimension shared in a movement or spirituality. Here the reproduction of lifestyles takes place by horizontal means of interaction and imitation not unlike those that help to reach personal identity and social identification (cf. Giddens 1999: 105 ff). Indeed it is in today's societies, which are ever less attributive, that identities and religious identification are ever more performative and the fruit of individual projects. Even religious lifestyles are composed on the basis of spontaneous adherence to other reference models, propagating themselves by horizontal means. The more situations in which an individual moves are post-traditional, the more religious lifestyles concern the heart of an individual's identity: that is to say, the building and transformation of identity in light of its changeable nature. In such a situation lifestyles are decisions not only about how to act but also "who" to be, dependent on what Peter Berger articulates as the "pluralization of life worlds."

Religion Between Style and Styles

Traditional religion had its own style: the style of a *community* which was incorporated in time, in space, in buildings, the multiplication of styles – e.g. of spirituality – indicates a transformation in which most of the distance that separates modern man from traditional experience consists. In stylization individual subjectivity finds the solution to the existential problem of how to reconcile individual attitudes with the totality of mass culture. From this derives the reflexivity of the subject and his desire to differentiate himself and to become distinct even in the field of identity and religious behavior. The label that Simmel gave to modern society of "not style" but "styles" may be attached to religion. It is the same dialectic, typical of modern society, as that between differentiation needs and identity needs.

Even in contemporary religions, where there is on offer a great quantity of lifestyles, each is distinguished by its content – that is, by a specific theological-value dimension – in such a way as to present itself in the "lifestyles" market. A lifestyle becomes objective by making itself available to whosoever adopts it, using it for one's own purposes and connoting it with personal means and functions independently of its original theological-value dimension. The objectivity of style in lifestyles is the first area where research can find out how those who belong to spiritualities join and how they define themselves. Research, in other words, can discover to what extent participation results from sharing a specific theological-value dimension (vertical dimension) or is only the effect of the reproduction of lifestyles from other lifestyles (horizontal dimension). The objectivity and impersonality of lifestyles allow them to be adapted to greatest number of people. Indeed, they have the gift of being particularly autonomous, and whoever adopts them uses

them for his or her own purposes, connoting them with personal meanings and values. This is the very progress of fashion; even Simmel considered style and fashion as "functional equivalents" because both perform individualization and socialization functions.

In conclusion, the multiplication of styles is connected with the aestheticization of religion and the more general tendency of aestheticization of daily life. This is a common sentiment, existing already in the past, but presented as *new* because it is no longer limited to single events and specific times but extends to all reality.[14] This climate does not lead to the eclipse of the sacred, rather it produces new experiences and religious feelings. Over a century ago, Simmel already signaled the growth of the aestheticization of reality, as well as the increasing importance of style, fashion, advertizing, the search for ever-new experiences and trends. Even the aestheticization of religion today underlines the importance of form and style, of new experiences and emotions. Instead of uncritically accepting a religious lifestyle from tradition or habit, the individual builds his or her own style reflecting his or her own individuality and planning skill.

Feedback from Lifestyles on Established Religions

What effects do lifestyles have on religions? In some cases lifestyle carriers have no intention of causing changes in their original religions. In others, the tendency of individuals and groups to differentiate themselves by their lifestyles is accompanied by the tendency to seek subsequent recognition and legitimation from their religions. In these latter cases, the lifestyles tend to be enriched by normative and universal elements, becoming meaningful not only for the individual but for everyone else as well. In all cases the lifestyles seem to have the effect of generating intense spiritual feelings, transforming everyday time (profane) into holiday time (sacred), slowing down the erosion of established religions' institutional links, opposing the process of dissipation of religious systems into systems of semi-religious or secular significance.[15]

For example, it will be interesting to see what feedback the Catholic Church will have from some lifestyles that have been built within its great events, such as World Youth Days, where religious behavior assumes the form of more transient identity through which young people "reveal themselves" and they too are "present." (see Garelli and Camoletto 2003). This also happens in those situations where even "the

[14] Baudrillard (1982: 10) describes the Beauberg Center (or Pompidou Center) in Paris as a great "cultural hypermarket" that attracts the masses.

[15] Here there is a particularly thorny problem for lifestyle analysis. The development of these identity potentialities changes the very concept of lifestyle or indicates that there are two different kinds of lifestyle: one that develops by imitation and participation on a practical level; the other that also embraces the level of values and beliefs (cognitive-value dimension). The Catholic religion has undoubtedly always expected the sharing of both practices and values.

religious" is involved in the more general process of the aestheticization of reality: religious fascination with places, peak experiences, art and music, neo-monasticism.

Autonomous Validation of Lifestyle

The multiple forms of lifestyles in the Christian tradition – from the mendicant Catholic orders of the thirteenth century, through Methodism and Protestant pietism, to the most recent forms, which some have called the lifestyle of "social saints" and, finally, the lifestyles of great religious events – have all represented a believing existence according to specific historical circumstances but depending on the churches to which they belong. They have always been lifestyles born and organized with the necessary continuity of a tradition as their main point of reference. Normative institutional recognition has been the common denominator, offering the chance of great differentiation to every lifestyle, on the levels of both liturgy and experience. This is the principle that some sociologists have termed the "validation principle": the validation regime is institutional, the validation instance is established authority, the validation criterion is authority.

Even in the way that innovative and reforming spirituality interprets faith, in its relations with the world and styles of life, its constituting principle has always been outside itself and refers to the memory of believers. Religious orders, congregations, confraternities, movements and so on registered their validation regimes and instances within a long-term institutional history. When this principle no longer worked, such spirituality became schismatic or created new religions or sects. It is with the beginning of the modern age that lifestyles have multiplied with great diversity, configuring the new social polymorphism of religious life – lifestyles of every kind displaying new sensitivity and methods of spiritual, human and ethical-professional formation. Sometimes they grow outside their own religious tradition or in harmony with lifestyles of other religions, using the same methods after their spirituality has been analyzed (cf. the findings of Roof and Wuthnow presented in Giordan 2006).

We can imagine that in thirteenth century Assisi some young friars followed Francis not so much for the revolution of values which he announced, but because of how he lived: in brotherly company, traveling through forests in the valleys of Umbria, dressing simply, founding monasteries in the most beautiful places in the region. This is the idea of *Erlebnis*. And this is the idea of religious lifestyle.

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Part II
Case Studies in the New Spirituality

Chapter 6
Toward a Sociology of Prayer

Giuseppe Giordan

Almost two years ago, while discussing with my colleagues the outcomes of some research concerning the practices of everyday life, we observed that many people assert that they pray regularly. This outcome is surely no surprise. Wishing to investigate this theme in depth, however, I have found that in sociology there are relatively few studies about this specific aspect of religiosity. This is especially surprising, since in virtually all studies of the sociology of religious behavior it is clearly apparent that a very high percentage of people declare they pray every day – and many say even many times a day.

Therefore I have begun to study prayer first because it is not a frequently studied theme from the sociological perspective. The second reason why I have chosen this theme is that I believe prayer is an interesting starting point to observe shifts from "religion" to "spirituality."

In this chapter, I will first examine definitions of prayer, indicating that there is a vast literature on this theme, ranging from philosophy to theology, and that in the ambit of human sciences and of social sciences praying has been studied by cultural anthropologists and ethnographers for over a century, and in more recent decades psychologists have also dedicated considerable attention to this theme, while the sociology of religion, relatively speaking, has only rarely made this theme a specific focus of research. The only author within the historical "fathers" of sociology who has written a volume on prayer (though it remains "unfinished") is Marcel Mauss, Emile Durkheim's nephew. Since it is the only work on the subject we have in the

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"classic books of sociology," I will begin by giving some attention to it.[1] Then I will examine how both clinical and social psychology have studied the theme of prayer, especially with regard to "coping." Finally I will make some suggestions about the way in which we might think of developing a "sociology of prayer."

What Do We Mean When We Say "Prayer"?

Praying is one of the practices that are common to all religions, a structural component that we may find in all religious experiences. We may define praying as the dialogical act between humanity and divinity, and such a dialogic act can take the most diverse forms: from sacrifice to magic, from festivities to rituals, from different forms of formal recitation to mysticism.

The aspect that is the most important sociological focus is the *relation*: to pray means to establish a relation between the limits of the human condition and divine power. It is a relation of power, and sociology has much to say about this subject. The human being is weak, mortal, in need of help, forgiveness, health, salvation. Praying is a dialogic intercourse, a universal relation common to all believers: religions are different as to beliefs, moral norms, rites, but they are equal for what concerns such relations with the divine – as gods or God. This relation, as any social relation, is strongly influenced by the social context in which it is situated, but the form of such a relation has some constant features that make very different religious traditions similar to each other.

The experience of praying is a global experience because it puts into a single relationship the human and the divine, the finite and the infinite. We may also say it is a holistic experience because it puts together all aspects of a human's life – persons' feelings as well as the facts of everyday life, fears as well as projects for the future. Some expressions, which Rudolf Otto (1950[1923]) has termed "the primordial sounds," are the human reactions to the experience of the sacred. A well-known example is the sacred syllable *Om* that according to Hinduism can be modulated through variations of breath and is then capable of expressing cosmic harmony. In Brahmanism *Om* is the *mantra* – in other words the little everyday prayer. We may find prayers of this kind in many religious traditions, from Christianity to Islam, from Judaism to Buddhism. It is interesting to notice how, comparing the various religions, there are prayers that appear to be so similar that they can almost be "exchanged" from one tradition to the other, and this because they express the same experience of the relation between the creature and the creator. The relation with the sacred that we find in praying, a power relation, can be

[1] Several studies about praying are certainly to be found in sociology of religion, even if the theme has not been investigated in a systematic way; see Beckford (1978), Swatos (1982), Poloma and Gallup (1991), Foster (1992, 2009), Csordas (1992, 1997), Meslin (2003), Pargament (2007), Baker (2008), McGuire (2008).

schemed in two movements: a first movement concerns humanity toward divinity, a second movement concerns divinity toward humanity. Inside the first dynamic, from humanity toward divinity, are the different methods of praying as well as even the contents of the different prayers.

Referring to the contents of praying, some ethnographic researchers have highlighted how the request prayer takes a fundamental place, even if not the only one: in this respect, the request for health in this world and the request for eternal salvation are two closely interwoven dimensions. In this context we also find the request for forgiveness. Beside the request prayer there are the thanking prayer, the praising prayer, the blessing prayer, a type of less "material" prayer, less linked to immediate interests – and just for this reason the different religious traditions consider the thanking and the praising prayers as the purest and the noblest forms. Obviously the request prayer opens the difficult question of the response to the various necessities presented to God: why aren't prayers always answered? And if praying is a power relation, it may happen that the individual implements particular strategies to "put pressure" and "condition" a positive answer from the divinity. As we will soon see, psychology has especially explored the working of such strategies in its studies of the relation between praying and "coping."

With what means do we pray? Historically humans have prayed using our bodies – making such gestures as kneeling, standing on tiptoe, or hopping, turning toward a geographic point, standing before an image or an icon, or prostrating. This is also true with feelings and emotions. The eyes, the arms, the hands, the head, the voice, laughing, crying – each part of the body can express a prayer. Where do we pray? About this aspect sociology could have much to say, given the public and "political" relevance of the places of prayer. As has been recently demonstrated by the debate in the United States about a Muslim cultural center (to include a mosque) near the site of New York City's "Ground Zero," the relation between religion and politics can play out in the acknowledgement, negotiation, and negation of places of prayer.

The second dynamic, that of God toward humanity, highlights how the human being puts himself or herself in a frame of mind to listen to God: God has something to say. The sacred texts are words that God addresses to people. The image of God offered by the social and cultural context deeply influences the perception that persons have of the messages that God is sending to them.

Rite and Belief Are United in Praying

Marcel Mauss's text on praying, *La prière et les rites oraux* (1968[1909]),[2] is a peculiar book because it is incomplete, and Mauss never wanted to publish it. According to Mauss, praying must be studied like any other cultural phenomenon – that is to say,

[2] Literally "Praying and Oral Rites," however the English translation is entitled *On Prayer*.

as the progressive shifting from more elementary to more evolved forms. Such passage from levels of the greatest simplicity to more elevated levels of complexity brings a process of individualization with it. But even if it is individualized, praying is never exclusively the product of an individual, for two main reasons: the meaning of the words that are used is socially determined, and each prayer is part of a ritual that, even though it may appear to be "private," is codified according to social norms. Mauss (1968[1909]: 391) says:

> Of all the religious phenomena, there are few like praying that, even if it is observed only from the outside, offers so immediately the impression of vitality, richness and complexity. Starting from a low level, little by little it has risen up to the top of religious life. Infinitely flexible, it has assumed the most various forms: of worship and constriction, humble and menacing, condensed and rich with images, immutable and variable, mechanic and mental (…). Rite and belief are united in praying.

It is this last statement that characterizes Mauss's thought about praying: it is a rite because it is an act, a "whole" of gestures endowed with sense, a behavior toward the sacred, a whole of actual movements from which some outcomes are expected. At the same time all these actions are held together by a belief, by a "creed." Mauss asserts that even where custom and habit have deprived praying of its sense, it continues to express a minimum of ideas and religious feelings.

Through praying the believer acts and thinks: each rite is linked to words, to language and to thought, and *vice versa* the religious thought, the beliefs, are linked to the action of praying. According to Mauss "a religious notion detached from the practices with which it works is something insubstantial and vague; on the other hand a practice whose meaning is unknown is a mechanical series of traditional movements" (1968[1909]: 25). Praying then puts myth and rite, belief and action together: they are the two inseparable faces of the same medal.

There is another aspect of Mauss' thought that can be useful to study praying: it is an idea that is strongly influenced by the evolutionist thought characteristic of the positivist approach. To Mauss praying "is one of the most significative signs of the state of advancement of a religion" (1968[1909]: 197). On this subject Mauss claims that religion has undergone a two-fold evolution: on one side it has gradually spiritualized, and on the other side it is inclined to become individualized. This double process that touches religions involves praying too. On this subject Mauss asserts that at the beginning, with primitive peoples, praying consisted in wholly mechanic repetition of formulas. Now praying has become a totally mental and interior act. From strictly collective and said in common, it becomes a moment of free conversation of the individual with God. Here Mauss suggests a scheme to study praying, a scheme that not even he was able to complete. First of all it is necessary to see how praying has formed in the elementary religions, to see afterward how it has evolved through a process of spiritualization and individualization. Yet Mauss (1968[1909]: 420) notes an alternative outcome as well:

> Praying has not only an ascending element, it has also its regression. Many times prayers that were totally spiritual become simple mechanic recitations. They are prayers that "fall to the level of a manual rite": the lips are moved as elsewhere the parts of the body are moved.

> They are the continuously repeated prayers, the prayers said in an incomprehensible language, the formulas that have lost all their meaning. The most spiritual prayer, then, can become depraved to the point of reduction to a simply material object.

Religion, Prayer, Health and Coping

The scientific literature on the theme of praying is to be found most of all in the field of psychology. Many empirical studies have investigated the relation between praying and health and the relation between praying and "coping." James Nelson (2009: 314) writes:

> Trying to prove or disprove that prayer "works" or is "ineffective" has been an irresistible topic to many researchers. One of the earliest studies of this type was conducted in the 1870s by Galton: he concluded that prayer does not work, because British royalty who are the target of prayers for long life in fact do not live longer than others. Like many other studies on prayer, Galton's work had many methodological problems and was dismissed by no less an authority than the great statistician Karl Pearson. Since then, research has tended to support the overall helpfulness of prayer, but findings are very inconsistent and relationships are weak.

Researchers have proposed several other types of mechanism to explain how religion has a salutary effect on health. They include the following (Nelson 2009: 317–20):

1. Promoting a healthy lifestyle and discouraging destructive habits like smoking or excessive alcohol consumption, as well as encouraging compliance and participation in health care services and preventive practices.
2. Supporting positive beliefs such as positive perceptions of self or others; a healthy worldview leading to optimism, hope, and reduction of uncertainty; positive ideas about God, or specific explanations such as ideas about a good afterlife.
3. Providing religious resources and skills for coping, such as prayer or devotional reading.
4. Regulating emotions to generate emotional stability or produce positive feelings, such as positive affect during ritual or prayer.

The use of these coping skills is a powerful predictor of recovery and survival once one is ill. When confronted with threats to health, people respond with coping behavior, which is an "ongoing cognitive and behavioral effort to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as exceeding the resources of a person" (Lazarus 1993: 237). Religion provides resources for coping with difficult situations, and these resources have either direct or indirect effects on health.

The most influential theory of religion and coping is that of Kenneth Pargament (1997). He views religion as a particular way that people search for meaning. In Nelson's words (2009: 323–24), it is the process of

> [A] search for meaning significance in ways related to the sacred. Religious coping happens when events, goals, and the means we use to reach them are actively interpreted in relation to the sacred, and this enhance our sense of meaning, control, comfort, intimacy, or support.

> Religion thus has a functional aspect, helping the person to either conserve or transform their goals, the pathways by which they seek their goals. The outcome of the religious coping process can be judged as good or bad depending on how well it meets situational demands, has a good balance of goals, and fits well with the person's social system

Pargament argues that there are three main styles of religious coping:

1. The self-directing coping style: in the self-directing coping style the individual acknowledges the presence of the sacred but relies on one's self rather than on God to solve a problem. The emphasis here is on personal autonomy and control. This style is negatively related to prayer.
2. The opposite of this is a deferring coping style in which responsibility for a problem is deferred to God. It is thus more passive and dependent upon authority and is associated with lower personal control and self-esteem.
3. Finally there is the collaborative coping style which involves an active partnership between the individual and God. This is positively related to prayer, greater personal control and higher self-esteem.

Prayer can become a kind of continual process so that even daily activities become transformed and are seen in a different way. In the Christian tradition, but not only in that tradition, prayer is a practice, not a commodity, requiring hard work and proper preparation.

Meditation has a different emphasis from prayer, although in practice the two overlap to some extent. While prayer usually has a conversational or discursive aspect in which thoughts and feelings are directed out of us toward someone or something, meditation involves non-discursive procedures aimed at altering attention, clearing the mind of normal thought patterns, and establishing a more receptive mode of consciousness. It is often thought of as a practice of Eastern religions like Hinduism or Buddhism rather than Christianity, but activities like meditation can be found in all religious traditions.

The Social Frameworks of Praying

Empirical sociological research about praying is still at its beginning. A recent article written by Joseph Baker (2008) uses the 2005 Baylor Religion Survey to provide information about sociological patterns of prayer frequency and content in the United States. Results indicate that women, African-Americans and those with lower incomes pray more often than males, whites and those with higher incomes. Concerning the content of prayer, African-Americans and those at lower levels of income and education are more likely to pray about petitionary concerns such as asking God to influence personal health or one's financial situation. Baker also tells us that the frequency of prayer is very high in the United States. An estimated nine out of ten people in the United States report praying at least occasionally, and this figure has remained steady for the past 50 years. In addition, an estimated three out of four people report praying daily. Among those who pray, 97% believe their prayers are heard and 95% believe they are answered.

Sociological interpretation of prayer cannot, however, be limited to simple percentages of those who pray and to their sociodemographic characteristics. The sociology of religion should be able to get into the deepest dynamics of praying, those dynamics that are not of a psychological nature or exclusively psychological, inasmuch as they touch definitely sociological aspects. Sociology has to do with power and institutions, and praying too can be studied following the perspective of power and institutions (cf. Swatos 1982). In other words, praying can be studied as a relation of power, since praying is a relation of power and of legitimization.

The subject addresses a transcendent power, a power to which she or he acknowledges special powers. The subject can address such transcendent power directly or through a community, that is to say through a religious community or a church. Even the relation between the Church and God is a relation of power: the source of the power of the religious institution is God; at the same time God's power is affirmed and reaffirmed by the religious institution.

The transcendent power "empowers" the subject, so that the subject feels he is "empowered" by the divine power. As an example: a high percentage of those who pray declare that their prayers are fulfilled by God. To the question "Do you believe that your prayer has been answered?" 95% of the Americans respond that they do. A very high percentage of those who pray, then, feel they are "empowered" by God. But what does it mean that the prayer "has been answered"? What kind of power has the believer who has obtained an answer received?

A recent study Luigi Berzano (2010), referring to the "social frameworks of knowledge" of George Gurvitch (1966), investigates the "social frameworks of prayer," connecting this concept to the Pentecostal churches that are spreading in Italy. In this context prayer is both a set of answers to the cognitive needs of individuals who question themselves about the mystery of life and death, as well as a route of emotional exploration of one's feelings and of one's deepest needs. In this way symbolic and ritual systems are built up, putting together rather different sociocultural elements. According to Berzano, the function of the churches composed of immigrants of only one nationality is to reproduce the "social frameworks of knowledge" typical of the countries of origin, and the prayer should perform this task in a specific way. Berzano suggests three constitutive elements of the "social frameworks of the prayer" referring to these Pentecostal churches in Italy: preserving the original symbolic sphere, the collective dimension of the group, and the material resources of the sacred. The prayer of the Pentecostal churches is adequate to meeting the needs of the new groups of immigrants insofar as it allows them to preserve items of their collective identity, to avoid separating, and to build some "social frameworks of solidarity." The function of preserving the symbolic sphere of a minority of people makes such churches important mechanisms of transmission of collective identities. This function is even more relevant within the social contexts in which ethnic differentiation is hardly tolerated or met with intolerance. The role of prayer within such churches is sociologically fundamental: it meets the need of collective identification founded on the acknowledgment of a "common sacred." From this point of view, "healing prayers" are the most outstanding example: to pray means to exert strength through repeating sacred words and expressions; the procedure of chasing the evil spirits away includes verbal and gestural techniques suitable to liberate places and people.

Expecting salvation, searching for protection, healing practices, and exorcisms are all items keeping the level of the emotional involvement of prayer high within the Pentecostal churches. From the sociological point of view, we might affirm that in the Pentecostal churches prayer performs the function of protecting the believers from anomie. Both the individual and collective prayers are successful ways to combat both the loss of identity and the consequent social disorganization. Experiences of shared life, defense of common rights, and recreational interests are blended together in the complex prayer system of the Pentecostal churches. A syncretistic mixture endowed with great proselytistic efficacy is the result.

From Religion to Spirituality: The Post-materialistic Prayer

Prayer performs a rather different role, however, if we shift our attention from the world of the Pentecostal churches linked to immigration to the ways of praying typical of western believers who live in a highly secularized context. Here prayer has a different function, mostly linked to the process of individualization typical of western societies. Under the concept of individualization a route is hidden that has a long history, but whose actual implications have been experienced clearly only in the contemporary epoch. To ascribe more and more importance to the individual, to individual choices and individual values, to consider the individual as a bearer of rights besides being a bearer of duties, has shifted the axis of legitimation of individual choices from that of obedience to institutions to the freedom of choice of the subject as an "autonomous" self. It is a complex, often contradictory process, whose outcome always appears as a challenge to the "institutional model."

The affirmation of the "culture of the self" with its features of self-realization and personal well-being, recontextualizes the reference to religion and its moral indications in a more ambiguous and temporary framework (Bellah et al. 1985); nevertheless, however fragile the support of "relying on oneself" to make important choices, it offers to the subject the possibility of having an extremely flexible system of meanings, capable of quickly adapting to ever-new biographic and social situations in a world that changes at growing speed. As Charles Taylor (1991, 2002) has convincingly demonstrated, the subjectivist turn of contemporary culture has brought the individual to interpret his own existence starting no longer from objective roles that are imposed from outside, but upon an incessant research of syntony with one's own "deep self." The objective "truth" that is so dear to institutions, especially religious ones, makes way for subjective authenticity, which becomes the way of judging the vital world in which the subject lives. Reflexivity becomes the key to face everyday life: we might say we are witnessing a shift from exteriority to interiority, from the formal and sometimes imposed observance of external rules to an attention to the exigencies rising out of the introspection of the self.

How can we re-define the relation with the sacred in an epoch characterized by a pluralism of values and by social acknowledgment of the freedom of choice of the

subject? In sociology of religion a debate has developed for two decades now about "spirituality," which has been constructed in a dialectic way to what concerns "religion."[3]

If the "religion" model regulates the relation with the sacred starting from the institution of believing – that is to say, starting from the traditional churches – the "spirituality" model puts the autonomous subject at the center, who can build for himself or herself routes of sense connecting the self to the transcendent – even at the border of or outside of traditional institutions. The turning point marking the shift from objective truth to subjective authenticity carries in itself specific consideration for emotions, feelings, body, single experiences of life, personal well-being, self realization – all aspects that are not seen in contradiction to or in competition with a meaningful relation to the sacred. In the post-secular epoch the sacred is no longer the exclusive monopoly of the religious institutions that have always controlled its borders but becomes open to the free research of the believing subject. A radical change takes place in relation to authority, which does not disappear, but will be obliged to rethink its own statute of plausibility starting from the exigencies of the subject. Post-secular spirituality, meant as one of the possible outcomes of the secularization process, outlines new modalities of believing and of relating to the sacred – and perhaps it is not an exaggeration to assert that it is a question of a change of paradigm.

In order to understand adequately the role of spirituality in the contemporary social and cultural context, it is necessary not to confront it directly with religion, but to take a step backward and reconsider the relation of the individual to the sacred. As James Beckford and N.J. Demerath (2007: 3) maintain, "religion is only one part of the wider sphere of what may be sacred to the individuals and to society": that is to say, we may relate to the sacred in a religious way or in a different way. Thus, while investigating the different modalities that make plausible and actually found the relation with the transcendent, we might define spirituality as a legitimation process of the sacred based on the freedom of choice of the individual and not on obeying the institution of believing. Spirituality thus consists in shifting the axis of legitimation from the institution to the subject.

Such a shift of legitimation has evident consequences even on the modalities of praying of the believing subject, as demonstrated by research I have carried out through 35 in-depth interviews with Italian young adults 25–40 years old. The group is formed of 19 women and 16 men, and includes people with both high and low levels of education. More than a half never or nearly never go to Mass, while a quarter do so nearly every week. We must keep in mind that they are Italian, which means that everybody takes for granted that they "are Catholic," even if as a matter of fact this might not mean much in properly religious terms.

Taking into account the theoretical framework expounded before, I will here confine myself to reporting the most relevant issues that emerged in the interviews.

[3] Regarding the sociological debate about the category of spirituality cf. Roof (1993, 1999), Wuthnow (1998, 2005), Heelas and Woodhead (2005), Giordan (2006, 2009), Flanagan and Jupp (2007).

The first issue is that praying is a popular practice, both among churchgoers and non-churchgoers. It is a practice that is not linked to any institutional element, disjoined from obedience to a religious norm. Everybody prays, even those who never or almost never go to Mass. Actually, we may say that the people who seldom go to Mass feel the need to address the sacred more than those who go to Mass more regularly.

While praying, the believer feels free to address God in the way she or he likes best, with words and gestures that are the fruit of personal creativity. In other words, praying represents the relation with the sacred in a non-institutional perspective. All the interviewees have highlighted how important it is for them to feel authentic while praying, in tune with their own feelings and their own emotions. Naturally some of them use traditional formulae – not because they derive from tradition, however, but rather because the subject finds them particularly deep and inspiring. The legitimization of the prayer does not proceed from the religious authority any longer. It simply proceeds from the liberty of choice of the subject. In this sense, in my view, prayer provides an important observation point to study the change from religion to spirituality, from obedience to the institution's rules to the freedom of the subject.

A second aspect concerns requests addressed to God while praying: what is it reasonable to ask, and what on the contrary is not reasonable? Basically there are two types of requests: material ones and nonmaterial ones. Analyzing the interviewees' answers carefully, it seems that material requests do not appear to be adequate. Asking for more money, more health, more luck in life seems to make sense only for a minority of people. These are certainly important issues, but according to the majority of the interviewees, God offers much more than material things.

According to a 35 year old female interviewee,

> God is not interested in letting us have more money, but He is interested in our well-being as persons, in the wholeness of our lives, in our feeling well with the others and especially with ourselves, and not only from the financial or from the health point of view. God has a greater project than ours in mind. He has all our own good in mind, and not only one single issue that may seem important to us, but that has a completely different meaning to Him.

In other words, asking for material goods doesn't seem reasonable. The request that seems to occur more often among these interviewees is the need for meaning in life, the light that allows us to interpret the different options offered in our daily lives. Therefore material things are not important, but meaning is instead.

Starting from these interviews, it seems possible to us to hypothesize the shift from a "materialistic prayer" to a "post-materialistic prayer." Following what Ronald Inglehart (1977) said more than 30 years ago, we can speak of a "silent revolution" even in the prayer ambit. We are witnessing the shift from the prevailing orientation in a materialistic sense to a more and more post-materialistic orientation – from the emphasis on physical and economic security toward a growing emphasis on the meaning of life, on the sense of belonging, on the need of self-realization, on intellectual and aesthetic gratification. Obviously the worries of materialistic nature, such as physical sustenance and personal security, have not disappeared, even if at

the moment exigencies of different nature, more linked to the quality of life, seem to be more important. And praying seems to have a relevant role in building a satisfactory life. Many interviewees highlight even the expressive aspect, typical of our culture. As Robert Bellah and his colleagues (1985) have pointed out, such expressive culture exists for the purpose of liberating the individual and letting a person realize himself or herself. Its peculiarity consists in making the individual capable of taking care of his or her own engagements, from marriage and work to political and religious involvement as an interpretation of the meaning of personal well-being and not as obedience to a moral imperative. Post-materialistic prayer, in other words, seems to be disjointed even from preoccupations of moral nature: it answers more to the needs of personal well-being, and even morals are subsumed by the framework of self-realization.

One last aspect seems to emerge out of the interviews: prayer is interpreted as a path of discovery of the "true self." Praying, and more so meditating, is described by half of the interviewees, especially the younger and more educated ones, as activities that lead to reaching the deepest layers of the self. Such activities take us to distinguish the "true self" from the "false self." And God, according to these interviewees, can be found only inside the "true self."

Finally, can prayer be interpreted as the subjective legitimization of the democratization of the sacred? No longer does prayer from fear of eternal damnation exist, but rather prayer is a fruit of the free choice of the subject who means to pursue higher and higher levels of personal well-being – even the relation with the sacred is interpreted in such framework, as an instrument useful to discovering the "true self." A God to obey who is external to the subject, the God of tradition, must live more and more with a God who is discovered within the individual self. Through prayer this contemporary God is re-defined as an instrument to achieve self-fulfillment.

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Chapter 7
The Concept of "Community" in Catholic Parishes

Patricia Wittberg

Ever since Ferdinand Toennies ([1887] 2004) first divided societies into *Gemeinschaften* and *Gesellschaften*, sociologists have been studying, and usually advocating, the characteristics and effects of "community." For a seemingly simple word, however, the meaning of "community" is, and has always been, unusually ambiguous. Hillary (1955) counted 94 different definitions of "community" in the academic literature of his day. Abercrombie et als' (1984) dictionary of sociological terms dismissed "community" as "one of the most elusive and vague [terms] in sociology, [which] is by now largely without specific meaning." More recently, Vaisey (2007: 851) complained that "few concepts have generated as much theoretical speculation and as little scientific payoff as 'community.'" The 1987 president of the ASA section on Community and Urban Society actually recommended that her colleagues stop using "the C word" altogether – it was too vague and too emotionally freighted to be of any scholarly use (Lofland 1987).

Synonyms and Distinctions

Part of the problem with defining "community" is the necessity of distinguishing it from several apparent synonyms. *Communion* is the first of these terms and refers to persons who are bound together primarily by strong feelings of affection or friendship. When the popular media refer to some place or group as having a strong "community spirit," they may really be describing the emotions of the communion and fellowship that exist there. But not all – or even most – communities are also communions. When looking at the small villages of the past and present, observers have often naively assumed that their inhabitants necessarily felt intense emotional

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attachment to each other: in other words, that these *communities* were also *communions*. But this may not be the case. Rural villagers may not be bound together by friendship; they may simply be "stuck" with each other by the mere circumstance of having been born in the same locality. In some cases, they may actively distrust and hate each other. In others, they may take each other's presence for granted without a lot of strong feelings one way or the other.

Because they are based on relatively transient feelings, communions are much more modern and more ephemeral phenomena than communities are (Schmalenbach 1965). Traditional communities may persist relatively unchanged for centuries, but communions usually find it difficult to sustain their original emotional fervor for any length of time. Eventually, they either dissolve or settle on a more routine and less emotional level of interaction (Lofland 2008: 240 ff). Communions, like most friendship groups, also tend to be relatively small in order to accommodate the necessity of mutual knowledge and affection among members. Since the members of communions tend to be satisfied with the number of friendship ties they already have, they may resist enlarging the group to accommodate newcomers. For this reason, communions are less likely to attract a second generation of members. Mistaking communion for community, therefore, can lead to serious confusion as to exactly what kind of group its members intend to create, and what kind of a future they anticipate for it. Trying to preserve the existence of a church *community* by strengthening its members' feelings of *communion* may actually close it off to new entrants and render it more, not less, likely to decline. Still, the terms overlap somewhat, since the members of many communities do become close friends.

A second concept that is often conflated with community is that of the *lifestyle group*. Some commentators treat the two as synonymous and speak of "The Arts Community," "The Gay Community," or "The Racing Community." Some regularly-interacting lifestyle groups may indeed be communities. Critics, however, charge that people can withdraw from a lifestyle without discommoding its other followers, while withdrawing from a community is usually more difficult for both those who stay and those who go (Day 2006: 219–220). In addition, some lifestyle groups may actively expel those whose lifestyles do not conform. Conflating a church community with following a particular lifestyle may therefore make it more exclusive and intolerant of those who are different.

In order to investigate the properties and effects of communities in Catholic parishes, therefore, we must first clearly define what "community" means in that context, in such a way that we distinguish it from – but clearly relate it to – other terms such as "communion" and "lifestyle group." Reduced to its essence, we can probably say that the fundamental distinguishing characteristic of a community is that its members feel they are mutually connected in some way and that they regularly interact out of this connection (Blakely and Snyder 1997; Delanty 2003: 40). This mutual connection may be based on sharing the same territory, whether for residence (a parish's neighborhood) or for some other use (in this case, the church's worship space). It may stem from common values or lifestyles (e.g. the local Right to Life chapter or a charismatic prayer group), from a common experience or social situation (e.g. a shared illness, widowhood), or from a deliberately-created support group or mutual aid association. Whatever its basis, to the extent that this mutual

connection leads to regular and sustained interaction within the parish over time, we can say that some sort of community has been formed there.

Catholic Community Before the Parish

Catholic parishes have not always existed, nor have they always been communities in and of themselves. Throughout the history of Catholicism, and in many places even today, most Catholics lived in traditional village communities of many overlapping dimensions, of which the local church was only one part. People lived close to each other, worked together, and celebrated the same seasonal festivals. One's incorporation into the Catholic community was *not* something that happened at the ritual Sunday worship; it flowed through one's entire life. The local church was not a "community" in itself; it was an interlocking part of the larger Catholic village community – that specific, essential part through which the community interacted with the Divine in sacred rituals. The clergy conducting these rituals lived with the area's bishop in the cathedral complex, not by themselves in local rectories – which, in fact, did not exist. They were responsible for traveling out to the villages and providing specific spiritual services to them – baptism, preaching, visiting the sick, and saying the requisite prayers for the dead. The villagers could withhold payment or otherwise sanction them if they were negligent in these duties (Blair and Sharpe 1992: 9, Charles-Edwards 1992: 69, Foot 1992: 184). There is not much evidence that the village people attended Sunday Mass regularly – either at the cathedral or elsewhere. Guilds in the later medieval towns also retained "their" priest primarily to provide spiritual services, in much the same way as one would purchase more material goods (Rosser 1992: 281). Community in these towns was based in the clan, guild, or locality, not in a particular church. Only after the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century was there a call to develop territorial parishes, each staffed by a formally-trained, resident parish priest and supervised by the bishop of the diocese. Even so, this official policy was not enforced for all rural and urban areas until the 1917 Code of Canon Law (Fichter 1951: 11). As recently as the twentieth century, the pre-Trent model still existed in the Hispanic areas of the southwest United States and Central America, and in some rural areas of the American Midwest (Jensen 1987: 177; Casino 1987: 11; McNally 1987: 129; Leege 1987: 5).

Immigrant Catholic Parishes in the Nineteenth Century United States

Prior to the 1840s, Catholics in the United States were so few that parishes simply did not exist for them in most areas. With the coming of the Irish, German, Italian, Quebecois, Polish and other immigrants, however, parishes were established by the hundreds and assumed a centrality that they had never had before (Dolan 1987:3). The parish became the linchpin in the immigrants' efforts to replicate deliberately

in urban America what they had experienced unreflectively in the *gemeinschaftlich* rural villages of Catholic Europe and Quebec.

For most of the early immigrants, their neighborhood ethnic parish thus became the center of their social and religious life, with a complete panoply of devotional societies, mutual aid organizations, sports teams, cultural and language preservation classes, liturgical celebrations, and, of course, the school. In such settings, it was possible to live one's entire life in the ethnic parish community without ever coming into contact with a non-Catholic – or even, in some cases, with a non-*Polish* (or Slovenian or German) Catholic. As one writer put it: "the parish frequently provided an all-embracing or total environment for the religious socialization of its members, with religious, educational, social welfare, and entertainment functions for all circumstances and needs" (Hornsby-Smith 1989: 66).

There were many practical advantages to the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ethnic parish system. They helped immigrants connect with co-ethnics who could provide support, mutual aid, and access to jobs. An ethnic parish's pastor could also advocate for the immigrants' interests in the local area or in the city as a whole (Foley and Hoge 2007: 30, 34). So great were these advantages that each of the new immigrant groups demanded their own parishes, despite the reservations of the Irish-dominated hierarchy. By 1930, 30% of all new parishes in the United States, or 21% of the total, were "national" parishes, and many of the territorial parishes were *de facto* ethnic ones as well (Burns 1987: 55; Casino 1987: 40). In the Old Country, their churches may have functioned as simple houses of worship, but immigrant Catholics adopted more expanded functions for them upon their arrival in America (Foley and Hoge 2007: 46, 222).

This was, to repeat, unusual. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ethnic parishes in the United States were atypically central in the lives of many – but not all – immigrant Catholic groups, to a far greater extent than had been common previously or in other countries. At the same time, however, the practical advantages of ethnic parishes enabled them to facilitate the successful assimilation of the immigrants' children and grandchildren. As these children joined mainstream American society and moved away, their old neighborhoods filled with newer immigrants, who may or may not have been Catholic.

Changes in the Mid-Twentieth Century

By the mid-twentieth century, the children and grandchildren of the earlier waves of immigrants no longer needed their parishes to serve as all-encompassing communities.[1] By 1960, only 17% of parishes in the United States were established for a

[1]The different religious needs of first- and second-generation immigrants are not unique to Catholicism, nor to the early twentieth century. Min and Kim (2005) chart a similar dynamic in Korean Protestant churches today, with second- and third-generation Korean Americans leaving their parents' and grandparents' ethnic congregations to join American ones.

single nationality, and the territorial parishes were far more heterogeneous than they had once been. Fichter's (1951, 1954) study of a New Orleans parish in the late 1940s found that it contained a wide variety of ethnicities, occupations and income levels – a far different situation from the homogeneity of previous generations. Often, each subgroup found they had more in common with non-Catholics of their same social class than they had with their fellow parishioners:

> The professional and business people tend to have close, cordial, and multiple social relations with a circle of non-Catholics who are associated in the same general occupational category. The semiskilled and skilled manual workers have similar social relations with non-Catholics in their own occupations. As Catholics, however, and as members of the same urban parish, these two groups seem hardly aware of one another's existence (Fichter 1954: 49).

This study noted that "the multiple functions of the old-fashioned, solidaristic, community parish have been attenuated" (Fichter 1954: 65–66). While the ideal of the parish as one big family/community might still be given lip service, the actual day-to-day operation of the big-city parish had now become "largely formalized, with office hours in the rectory and a schedule of appointments" (Fichter 1954: 126). As Putnam (2000) would maintain 40 years later, Fichter traced these changes in the parish community to "the individualization, or 'atomization' of urban social life," "the escape mechanisms of modern society" such as TV, and – especially – to the increased mobility of parishioners (Fichter 1954: 85–91). The turnover of members, he stated, was "the largest single reason for the lack of solidarity in urban parishes" (Fichter 1954: 98)

Catholic parishes in the 1950s were changing from their former role as the tight-knit, all-encompassing focus of their immigrant parishioners' lives – a model of parish community that had been highly unusual, even unique, in the long history of Catholicism – to a looser associational model. "It is quite possible," Fichter noted, "that smaller village parishes tend toward the ideal of the communal group. In the large urban parish, however, the great majority of lay persons seem to use the local church as a kind of 'service station' for their religious needs" (Fichter 1954: 188). In much the same way that medieval villagers had once looked to the priest as the provider of a service, the relationship between the priest and parishioner in the 1950s parish was becoming "somewhat like the professional relationship between dentist and patients." The difference, however, was that, unlike medieval villagers, many 1950s parishioners had no other Catholic community to take the place of the vanishing ethnic parish.

Catholic Parish Communities Today

When speaking of community in the daily practice of Catholicism today, most observers appear to believe that it is – and should be – primarily located within the local parish or congregation. American Protestantism's "voluntary model" of church

membership typically holds that the local church should be a true community of "soul mates." Consider:

> The ultimate meaning of the church is an expressive-individualist one. Its value is as a loving community in which individuals can experience the joy of belonging (Bellah et al. 1985: 230).

> Churches are communities in so far as they cultivate openness, acceptance, smiles, and hugs. To be involved in such a community is to participate, to share. Laughter and conviviality… have become the essential features of [church] community (Wuthnow 1998: 54).

> The Congregation is where suburbanites can make friends (Warner 1994:71).

> These congregations create a small-town community in placeless suburbia (Thumma and Travis 2007: 77).

This view, however, risks confusing community with communion. The first three of these quotations specifically equate congregational membership with possibly transitory feelings; the fourth appears to consider today's church to be a gathering place equivalent to a nineteenth-century village (with the unstated assumption that such small communities inevitably were locales for communion as well).

Perhaps influenced by this congregational model, much of the current literature on the American Catholic parish assumes that they, too, should be unified communities – as they presumably were in some idealized past (Castelli and Gremillion 1987: 57; Maines and McCallion 2007; but see Baggett 2009: 159). As we have seen, however, this was not true for a good part of Catholic history, and it may not be possible today either. For one thing, Catholic parishes are typically far larger than the average Protestant congregation and are becoming progressively more so (Foley and Hoge 2007; Ellison et al. 2009: 3; Ammerman 2005: 8). More than a quarter of Catholic parishes now have over 1,200 registered households and over 3,000 parishioners, which puts them on a level with some of the largest Protestant megachurches (D'Antonio et al. 2007: 108). Catholic parishes have also become more heterogeneous in class and ethnicity, and more transient in member turnover. These attributes of size, stability/ transience, and heterogeneity/homogeneity have been linked to the decline of "community" by social scientists from Simmel ([1903] 2004) and Wirth (1938) to Kornhauser (1959) and Putnam (2000), and many studies of church congregations assume a similar dynamic. The larger and more heterogeneous a congregation is, they say, the easier it is to keep apart from its communal aspects. As one study of Protestant megachurches noted, "Some people intentionally don't want to establish friendships, even if they are highly committed to the church. Certain people come because they can be, and want to remain, anonymous" (Thumma and Bird 2009a: 22). Such parishioners don't want community; they value their parishes primarily as facilitators of their own private spiritual development. Gilkey calls these persons "the audience church" (1994: 107).

How well do today's Catholic parishes do in fostering community? Is it still important to their parishioners that they do so? Those who assume that parish communities should be communions (i.e., based on intimacy, friendship, and spiritual sharing) will argue that a large parish cannot possibly be a single community. Instead, they say, each parish should function as the "umbrella" under which a

plethora of smaller, "true" communities can shelter: small faith-sharing groups, mothers' clubs, scouting troops, local chapters of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, sodalities, or the Blue Army (Johnson-Mondragon 2008: 9–10). In this view, a parish, while not a true community in itself, serves as the locale and catalyst for fostering the "real" communities where the faith is lived and expressed.

Is the formation of such small groups really effective in ameliorating the negative effect of size on parish community? In general, Protestant megachurches with over 2,500 members have "significantly lower levels of anticipated support than members of other congregations, and this disparity is *not* offset in congregations with more vibrant and varied small groups, or by the availability of special purpose groups to join, or opportunities for informal sociality before and after worship services" (Ellison et al. 2009: 3, 12 [emphasis added]). Studies of these large Protestant congregations have found that their members are somewhat less likely to attend weekly services, and that they give less money per capita to the collection than members of smaller churches do (Thumma and Bird 2009b). They are also less likely (76% as compared to 86%) to say that their spiritual needs are being met in the church. Nearly half (45%) never volunteer in church activities and, although almost all of the megachurches (84%) report establishing and encouraging small faith-sharing groups, 40% of their congregants do not bother participating in them. Even among persons who have attended the same megachurch for more than 10 years, over a quarter report having no close friends there. As Protestant megachurches continue to increase in size, their members' feelings of community have decreased. The sheer size of the worship services in megachurches can seem anonymous and spectator-oriented. Just between 2005 and 2008, the percentage of megachurches that described themselves as "like a close-knit family" fell from 72% to 62% (Thumma and Bird 2009a, b; Thumma and Travis 2007: 96).

Is increasing size similarly detrimental to feelings of community in Catholic parishes? One 2000 study found that large size had a strong negative effect on parishioner satisfaction, sense of community, and feelings of spiritual growth (Peyrot and Sweeney 2000). On the other hand, another study found that the percentage of Catholics complaining that their parishes were "too big and impersonal" fell from 46% to 40% between 1999 and 2005, even as the average size of Catholic parishes increased (D'Antonio et al. 2007: 109). So the effect of size on community in Catholic parishes is still being debated. And what about the effects of increased transience, or of ethnic and class heterogeneity?

Methods and Data

To address these questions, I will use the data compiled from a series of surveys administered between 1996 and 2008 by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University to over 800 parishes across the United States. While some of these surveys were commissioned by individual parishes on their own initiative, eight dioceses throughout the country required all of

their parishes to participate.[2] Each parish or diocese picked a subset of questions from CARA's 500-question list for their survey. Some also wrote and added questions specific to their own local situation. Some of the questions in CARA's list were picked by relatively few (or no) parishes; if a question was chosen by fewer than 25 parishes, it was omitted from the analysis here. In addition, some parishes returned very few questionnaires. If a parish had fewer than 20 respondents, it was omitted from the final data set. The current study, therefore, is based on questionnaires returned by 765 parishes.

While each participating parish or diocese was given a summary of its own members' answers at the time its own survey was completed, my current writing will be the first to compile and compare the answers for all 765 parishes. The unit of analysis is the parish, not the individual. Since the parishes varied widely in both the questions they chose to ask and the order in which they asked them, it would have been prohibitive in time and effort to combine the surveys on an individual level. Also, CARA had once hired a graduate assistant to compile an Excel spreadsheet of each parish's overall percentages, so the data had already been collected on the parish level through 2003. I completed the compilation through January 2009.

It must be noted that these questionnaires were completed by relatively active Catholics. Some were distributed at Sunday Mass; others were mailed and returned. In either case, less active parishioners – those who did not attend Sunday services regularly or those who did not bother to fill out the questionnaire – are not adequately represented in this study. Still, the responses we do have are interesting, in that they represent the values and priorities of active and committed Catholics.

Many of the survey questions asked churchgoers about the forms of "community" in their parishes: how important "community" was in comparison to other factors, how well the parish was currently doing in fostering "community," and how great a priority the respondents would place on developing more parish "community" in the future. These questions are listed in Table 7.1, along with the number of parishes that chose to include that question on their survey.

Findings

The CARA parish surveys report some interesting patterns regarding the relationship between how large a parish is and its parishioners' feelings of community. While the surveys did not ask for each parish's official membership size, the number of questionnaires returned by its parishioners is a good substitute: it is probable that a parish returning 2,000 questionnaires is larger than one returning only 25.

[2]These dioceses were Sacramento CA, Oklahoma City, Amarillo TX, Pensacola FL, Helena MT, Fall River MA, Raleigh NC, and Phoenix AZ.

Table 7.1 Community questions

Question wording	Number of parishes asked this question
Please evaluate[a]	
Sense of community within the parish	719
Social activities	484
Small faith-sharing groups	28
Hospitality or sense of welcome at Mass	423
Small prayer groups	187
Parish efforts to invite you to participate in parish life	240
Parish efforts to communicate with parishioners	544
Parish efforts to respond to parish community concerns	35
Parish efforts to invite you to participate in parish ministries	173
What priority should the parish give to the following[b]	
Small group prayer opportunities	482
Developing a parish sense of community	212
How much do the following attract you to this parish?[b]	
It's open, welcoming spirit	552
The sense of belonging you feel here	218
How helpful would you find it to learn more about[b]	
Sense of community among parishioners	71
How likely are you to do the following[b]	
Participate in a small faith-sharing group	89
Please respond to the following statements about parish life[c]	
I feel included in parish life	425
I feel well informed about what goes on in our parish	32

Response Categories:
[a]1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent
[b]1 = None or not at all, 2 = Only a little, 3 = Some, 4 = Very or very much
[c]1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Strongly agree

Table 7.2 Parish sizes (as measured by number of questionnaires returned)

Size category	Number of parishes	Percent
Small (less than 500)	600	69.2
Medium-large (500–1,500)	124	27.2
Very large (more than 1,500)	31	3.6
Totals	867	100

As indicated on Table 7.2, two-thirds of the parishes returned fewer than 500 questionnaires, and were classified as "small." Another quarter returned between 500 and 1,500 questionnaires and were classified as medium in size. Only a small number (31, or 3.6% of all the parishes) returned more than 1,500 questionnaires. Since a parish returning more than 1,500 questionnaires likely had 2,000 or more actual attendees, such a threshold corresponds to the standard definition of a megachurch (Thumma and Travis 2007: xix). In the data analysis that follows, however, the variable for parish size is used in its original, ungrouped, form.

Table 7.3 Bivariate correlations between parish size or stability and community variables

Question	Size	Stability	Percent poor	Percent uninvolved
Please evaluate				
Sense of community within the parish	.182**	−.102**	−.224**	n.s.
Social activities	.368**	−.223**	−.315**	n.s.
Hospitality or sense of welcome at Mass	.169**	−.265**	−.168*	.189*
Small prayer groups	.528**	−.338**	−.207*	.514**
Parish efforts to invite you to participate in parish life	.135*	−.156*	n.s.	n.s.
Parish efforts to communicate with parishioners	.193**	−.247**	−.203*	n.s.
Parish efforts to invite you to participate in parish ministries	.227**	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
What priority should the parish give to the following				
Small group prayer opportunities	.105*	−.204**	.166*	−.194*
Developing a parish sense of community	.158*	n.s.	−.397**	n.s.
How much do the following attract you to this parish?				
It's open, welcoming spirit	.147**	−.273**	n.s.	.170*
The sense of belonging you feel here	n.s.	.232**	n.s.	n.s.
How likely are you to do the following				
Participate in a small faith-sharing group	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	−.311**
Please respond to the following statements about parish life				
I feel included in parish life	−.172**	n.s.	n.s.	−.213**
Percent uninvolved	.445**	−.444**	n.s.	
Percent highly involved	−.265**	.347**	n.s.	

*Significant at .05 level (2-tailed)
**Significant at .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 7.3 reports the relationship between parish size, stability, and heterogeneity, on the one hand, and the various survey questions measuring parish community. Perhaps surprisingly, the larger a parish was, the *more* likely its parishioners were to evaluate the sense of overall community and its hospitality at Mass as "Good" or "Excellent," and to say that its open, welcoming spirit was attractive to them. This is the exact opposite of what traditional sociological theory would have predicted, but it does correspond to the findings of the 1987 Notre Dame study of parish life, which had also found a slight tendency for larger parishes to have more satisfied parishioners (Leege 1987:7).

If parishioners at larger parishes ranked community there more highly, it was not because they had lower expectations: the members of large parishes were also more likely to give high priority to developing a parish sense of community. On the other hand, however, the members of the *smallest* parishes were the most likely to say they felt included in parish life, a figure which is supported by the negative correlation between parish size and parishioner involvement. Percentage figures support

the correlations. On average, more parishioners at mid-sized (51.5%) and very large parishes (49.5%) were not involved in any parish ministry at all, and the percentage of those who were *very* involved in parish ministries[3] was twice as large in the small parishes (5.4%) as in the mid-sized (2.6%) or largest ones (2.8%).

What about the turnover of parishioners? Observers as long ago as the 1940s and 1950s believed that frequent turnover of membership was the primary reason for declining community in parishes (Fichter 1954: 98; Casino 1987: 79). Parishes varied widely in stability, with one quarter reporting an average parishioner tenure of less than 12 years, while another quarter reported averages of 24 years or more. The CARA data show that many of the same surprising patterns that occurred in the relationships between size and community also occurred between stability and community. Parishioners in very stable parishes with little member turnover were *less* likely to evaluate parish community measures as "Good" or "Excellent," or to say that the opening, welcoming spirit at Mass was attractive to them. But at the same time, stability was positively correlated with actual parishioner involvement. This was the same pattern as with larger parish size: a high ranking given to *feelings* of community in more transient parishes, but lower actual *involvement* there. Both the most and the least stable parishes reported the highest percentage of parishioners feeling included in parish life, which resulted in the non-significant ("ns") overall correlation for these variables in Table 7.3.

The third factor hypothesized to affect feelings of community is the heterogeneity of parishioners' backgrounds. As parishes get larger, they are more likely to be racially or ethnically diverse (Dougherty and Huyser 2008; Thumma and Travis 2007: 139–140). Observers in earlier eras had felt that this heterogeneity diminished parishioners' feelings of community (Fichter 1954: 49). What is the impact of racial and ethnic diversity today? One case study of a single Catholic parish found that parishioners from the majority group liked having fellow parishioners of different ethnic backgrounds, but that members of the minority felt excluded – however unintentionally – from parish life (Christerson and Emerson 2003). Dudley and Roozen's study of 41 different religious traditions found that Catholics put the most effort into improving the inclusiveness of their local parish communities (2001: 32). What effect have these efforts had?

The possible multi-ethnic character of the CARA parishes was determined in two ways. In many parishes, the survey was given in two languages: English and either Spanish, Polish, or Portuguese. Also, 475 of the survey parishes included a question asking for the ethnic background of the parishioners. Parishes which returned surveys in two different languages and those in which no more than 79% of their respondents were of any one ethnic group were considered "multi-ethnic." There were 197 multi-ethnic parishes using this measure, or 26% of the total.

A difference of means test (not shown) revealed that ethnic heterogeneity had no significant effect on feelings of community attachment or belonging. There was no significant difference between mono-ethnic and multi-ethnic parishes in

[3]The "very involved" were involved in five or more ministries/activities or reported spending more than 10 hours per month at them.

(1) their tendency to rate as good or excellent the parish's sense of community, its invitation to participate in parish life, or its hospitality/welcome at Mass; (2) the priority the parishioners gave to developing a parish sense of community, or (3) the percentage who said they felt included in parish life. Perhaps this was because, as observers of Protestant megachurches have also noted, homogeneity of faith allows for heterogeneity along other dimensions (Thumma and Travis 2007: 29). Still, however, significantly fewer parishioners were heavily involved in parish activities in the multi-ethnic parishes (3% as compared to 4.7% in the mono-ethnic parishes), and far more were not involved in any activities at all outside of Mass (47% as compared to 38.3%).[4]

Another way parishes can be heterogeneous is by income. Of the 764 parish surveys, 351 included a question asking about the respondents' income. There was a strong tendency for the poorer of these parishes (those with average parishioner incomes less than $40,000) to rate the overall level of community lower than the richest parishes (those where at least 25% of the parishioners earned more than $80,000). Parishioners at poorer parishes also gave less positive ratings to the parish's social activities, its hospitality at Mass, and its efforts to communicate with parishioners than parishioners at richer parishes did. They also gave less priority to developing a parish sense of community in the future. Parishioners in the poorer parishes gave a higher priority to developing small group prayer opportunities, but they were less likely to be satisfied with the small prayer groups they currently had. There were no significant differences between poor parishes and wealthier ones in the percentages of their members who were involved or uninvolved in other ministries, nor in how included the respondents felt in parish life.

Attending an economically heterogeneous parish – one with a wide variety of incomes[5] – made parishioners more likely to rank overall parish community, parish social activities, small prayer groups, and hospitality at Mass highly. Members of economically heterogeneous parishes also gave a somewhat higher priority to developing a sense of parish community. Again, however, in spite of being more positive about parish community, the members of economically heterogeneous parishes were less likely to be involved in parish ministries outside of Mass. These differences are summarized in Table 7.4.

Whatever the relationship is between size, heterogeneity, or membership turnover in a parish on the one hand, and the sense of community its parishioners feel on the other, it does not seem to be a straightforward one. Perhaps feelings of community are mediated, even in large, heterogeneous, and highly mobile parishes, by whether parishioners become involved in other ministries or activities there. Becoming active in one's parish is likely to increase the number of one's fellow parishioners whom one knows well – especially if the activity involves regular and frequent contact with the same group of people. Large parishes may have a wider

[4]Both of these differences are significant at .02 or better. Table not included.

[5]Income heterogeneity was defined as *either*: (1) having no less than 10% and no more than 25% of parishioners in each of the five income categories, or (2) having between 20% and 25% of parishioners at each of the two extremes of income: <$25,000 and >$80,000.

Table 7.4 Parish economic heterogeneity and community: Average percent responding positively

Question	Homogeneous parishes	Heterogeneous parishes
Please evaluate		
Sense of community in the parish (334)	80.5*	84.2
Parish social activities (173)	63.9**	78.6
Hospitality/welcome at Mass (175)	81.7*	87.7
Small prayer groups (150)	57.3**	75.0
How much priority should the parish give to developing a parish sense of community? (164)	89.6*	93.3
Percent involved in at least one parish ministry (92)	70.3	59.9

Number in parentheses is the number of parishes which were asked this question
Difference of Means Test:
*Significance = .05
**Significance = .01

variety of opportunities to become involved, thus enticing more parishioners to do so. On the other hand, large parish size and rapid turnover may make it easier to become a "free rider," secure that other parishioners will do the heavy lifting.

One of these possibly mediating activities is participating in a small prayer group. However, small prayer groups do not seem to be a consistent factor in ameliorating the effects of size, stability, and heterogeneity in Catholic parishes. While parishioners at large, heterogeneous, and highly transient parishes were more likely to give a positive evaluation to their parish's small prayer groups and to say that the parish should give high priority to encouraging such groups in the future, there was no significant difference between large and small parishes, stable and transient parishes, poor and non-poor parishes, or economically heterogeneous and homogenous parishes in their members' willingness actually to *join* such groups.

There are, of course, many other opportunities for parish involvement besides small prayer groups. The overall average percentage of respondents in the CARA parishes who reported at least some extra activities was 58% – a far higher percentage than the percentage in Fichter's 1951 study, or even than the 48% reported in the 1987 Notre Dame Study (Fichter 1954: 157; Castelli and Gremillion 1987: 4, 67). Unexpectedly, however, parishes containing a high percentage of uninvolved parishioners reported levels of overall satisfaction with parish community that were similar to parishes with fewer uninvolved parishioners.[6] Parishioners whose parishes had higher than average proportions of uninvolved members were actually *more* likely to rate hospitality at Mass and small prayer groups highly, and to say that their parish's open spirit had attracted them. The only expected findings were that less involved parishes were likely to have fewer members giving high priority to small group development or expressing a willingness to join one. Uninvolved

[6]There were two questions that measured parish involvement, and parishes tended to pick only one or the other. Therefore, "uninvolved" parishioners were defined as those who *either* (1) listed *no other ministries or activities* that they were involved in within the parish, or (2) said they spent *no hours per month* on "the work of the parish."

Table 7.5 Regression of percent uninvolved parishioners on parish characteristics (Beta)

Independent variables	I	II
Size	.338**	.289**
Stability	−.331**	n.s.
Percent white parishioners	−.195*	
Percent hispanic parishioners	n.s.	
Percent poor		.413**
Percent rich		.574**
R^2	.324	.286

*Sig. <0.05
**Sig. <0.01

parishes were also likely to have fewer members saying that they felt included in parish life.[7] The problem with all such correlations, however, it that they cannot say which came first: do parishes have high proportions of persons feeling excluded from parish life because their percentage of uninvolved parishioners is so high, or is the percentage of uninvolved persons high because so many feel excluded? Another problem is the so-called "ecological fallacy": just because a parish ranks low both on parishioners feeling included and on parishioner involvement does not necessarily mean that it is the *uninvolved* parishioners who are the ones feeling excluded. Still, there seems to be a logical relationship between lack of involvement and feelings of inclusion. It is less clear why lack of involvement would lead to *increased* satisfaction with parish openness and hospitality at Mass.

Correlations also do not adequately measure the independent effects of variables that are themselves correlated. For example, size is related to stability: in CARA's smallest parishes, the average length of parishioner residence was 18.6 years, which declined to 14.9 years in the mid-sized parishes and 12.8 years in the largest parishes. As parishes become larger, therefore, they also become more transient. Ideally, OLS regression analysis could be used to determine the independent effects of size, stability/transience, and economic or ethnic heterogeneity on parishes while controlling for the other factors. However, while size and stability data were available for all parishes, the other data were not. Because the 765 parishes chose varying combinations of the other questions, listwise deletion of missing cases rapidly reduced the number of cases in the equation as additional independent variables were added. It was necessary to run separate equations to measure the impact of ethnic and economic heterogeneity.

With regard to the involvement of parishioners in activities and ministries outside of Sunday Mass, the first regression in Table 7.5 shows that the positive effect of size and the negative effect of stability remains when the two variables are controlled for each other and for the percentage of white parishioners in the parishes. As with the bivariate correlations, larger and less stable parishes had higher percentages of uninvolved parishioners. Parishes with a higher percentage of white members had fewer

[7] In contrast, parishes with *high* levels of parishioner involvement had *decreased* priority given to developing parish community – perhaps because parishioners there were already as involved as they felt they could be.

uninvolved parishioners; there was no independent effect for the percentage of Hispanics. In the second regression, the negative effect of size on parish involvement remained, but the effect of stability was negated. Interestingly, the parishes which are either uniformly poor or uniformly rich seem to have higher percentages of uninvolved parishioners than parishes that are more economically heterogeneous.

To explore the paradoxical bivariate findings in Tables 7.3 and 7.4 – that large, transient, and heterogeneous parishes had members who actually were *more* satisfied with various measures of community, several OLS regressions were run with each of the community measures as a separate dependent variable, as well as with a combined satisfaction scale constructed of several of these measures. When considered together, size, stability and economic heterogeneity had no impact on parishioners' ratings of parish community, on hospitality at Mass, on feeling included in parish life, or on the combined satisfaction scale.[8]

Community and Communion: Effects on Growth and Outreach

As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, community is not always an unalloyed good for Catholic parishes. Specifically, a tightly-knit, longstanding community – especially one united by "communion" feelings of friendship – may not be open to new members who wish to join them, to say nothing of actively inviting such members. Table 7.6 shows that, as with the previous variables, parishioners at large parishes were more likely to rate parish outreach efforts more highly, but they were less likely actually to engage in such outreach efforts themselves. Parishioners at stable parishes were even more negative: they were both less likely to evaluate parish outreach efforts positively and less likely to say that they themselves would invite others. In general, parishes whose members are satisfied with overall community there are also more likely to have many members saying that they would invite others, but there is no similar relationship for parishes whose members give a high *priority* to developing community.

To determine the independent effects of size, stability, and community satisfaction on parish outreach variables, a series of regression equations show that parish size is positively related to satisfaction with parish outreach, but negatively related to respondents' likelihood of actually inviting outsiders. Parish stability, again, has consistently negative effects: both on satisfaction with parish outreach and on likelihood to invite outsiders to parish events. Parishes whose members expressed high

[8]The combined satisfaction scale was probably vitiated by a small N. The only exceptions to the general non-significance of the variables tested were that more stable parishes were slightly less likely to grant priority to developing community (beta –.188, sig. .014), but size, economic heterogeneity and proportion noninvolved had no effect. Parishes with a high percentage of noninvolved parishioners also had high percentages that did not feel included in parish life (beta –.176, sig. .01) and to evaluate overall parish community more negatively (beta . –.226 sig. .025). Again, the other variables in these equations were not significant.

Table 7.6 Correlations between parish outreach and parish community variables

Question	Size	Stability	Satisfaction with		High priority develop parish community
			Overall parish community	Hospitality at mass	
Please evaluate parish outreach to the following groups					
New parishioners	.334**	−.339**	.656**	.722**	.240**
Inactive Catholics	.369**	−.314**	.607**	.521**	.209**
How likely are you to do the following					
Encourage someone to return to the Catholic faith	−.368**	−.263**	.340**	.289**	n.s.
Invite someone to attend a parish activity	−.534**	−.389**	.277**	.413**	n.s.

*Significant at .05 level (2-tailed)
**Significant at .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 7.7 Regression of parish outreach measures on parish community characteristics (Beta)

Independent variables	Satisfaction with		Likely to	
	Outreach to new parishioners	Outreach to inactive catholics	Encourage someone return	Invite someone to parish events
Size	.206**	.211**	−.429**	−.350**
Stability	−.145**	−.121**	n.s.	−.378**
Satisfaction with parish City	n.s.	.376**	.688**	n.s.
Overall satisfaction scale	.634**	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
R^2	.620	.410	.203	.323

*Sig. <.05
**Sig . <.01

satisfaction with community, however, were also likely to report higher percentages of satisfaction with outreach to inactive Catholics and higher likelihood of encouraging them to return to the faith. But they are no less likely to invite outsiders to parish events (Table 7.7).

Conclusions

The trend for parishes in the United States to become larger is probably irreversible in the foreseeable future, driven as it is by the shortage of priests and the movement of Catholics into suburban areas. On the one hand, Catholics who still attend Mass at these larger parishes express themselves as satisfied with the amount of community they find there. But they are less likely actually to become involved in ministries

or activities outside of Sunday Mass. It is precisely in these activities that stronger community bonds are forged. Without such bonds, Sunday liturgies are impoverished, and those attending Mass become more and more an "audience Church" and less a community. The "audience church" mentality is also seen in the relative unwillingness of parishioners at large parishes personally to invite new members to join them.

Many parishes in the United States are also becoming more ethnically and economically heterogeneous. This has both positive and negative implications. In general, parishioners in economically heterogeneous parishes evaluate the sense of community there more highly and give more priority to developing it further. But, again, they are less likely to be actively involved in ministries outside of Sunday Mass. Ethnic heterogeneity does not seem to affect these tendencies one way or the other.

But maybe in a truly *Catholic* church, there is room for many different types of parish community. Some very stable parishes may be "communities" in the original sociological sense of the word: places where the inhabitants take their belonging for granted but do not necessarily feel a strong attachment for each other. Other stable parishes may be "defended communities," so threatened by economic, ethnic or racial transition within their geographic boundaries that they erect strong barriers to repel newcomers (Suttles 1972). Still others may be welcoming of newcomers overall, but may have strongly communal subgroups – the choir, the Mothers' Club, the PTA – that resist outside intrusion. Similarly with ethnic heterogeneity: there is probably a strong difference between a parish whose oldest members are immigrants who still speak Polish while the newer members are American Catholics of mixed or attenuated ethnicity, and a parish whose established members are Anglos while the newcomers are Latino – yet both of these parishes would have been labeled "ethnically heterogeneous" in the – current study.

Similarly, measuring the actual level of parish "community" by how much "community" the parishioners *say* they have is also unsatisfactory. People have different preferences: the level of "community" which one person would find nourishing and supportive another might find intrusive and nosy. "Audience Church" parishioners may be highly satisfied with very few community-building parish activities, while others in the same pew each Sunday may find their parish cold and alienating. In over a century of research, sociologists have never found a satisfactory way to measure "community" through attitude surveys: all they can measure is how people *feel* about their "community."

This means that there is need for a more reflective and deliberate process of communal discernment. Church leaders and parishioners need to ask themselves the hard questions about their parish community in an atmosphere of love and acceptance, because the answers will be challenging. How welcome do the newest members feel? How welcome do they *want* to feel? If there are two or more disparate categories of people in the parish – Hispanic or Anglo, Black or White, old stalwarts or residents of the new subdivision down the road, rich or poor – how much and how deeply do they interact? Is there some group that does not feel included at all? Why not? What about the various parish committees, small faith communities, liturgical

ministries – are any of them *too* communal and exclusive? How can their members be encouraged to reach out? Are there people whose individual talents are never tapped because they are not part of the "in crowd" that runs things – or is that simply their excuse for not getting involved? When should efforts be made to draw in "audience church" members, and when should their need for anonymity be respected?

It has been commonplace for observers to decry the relative weakness of the parish system in Europe, and to contrast it with the relatively strong parishes in the United States (Deck 2006; Landron 2006). It is true that the respondents to the CARA surveys express relatively positive feelings about their parish communities, even as these communities increase in size, transience, and heterogeneity. But continuing reduction in actual parish *participation* by an increasingly audience-oriented church may bode ill for the future. And non-Mass-attending Catholics – who all evidence indicates comprise close to three-fourths of the total (Chaves and Cavendish 1994; Hadaway and Marler 1998, 2005) – have already withdrawn from the parish community and are not included in the CARA data. Mass attenders are a self-selected lot: by definition, they are at least somewhat satisfied with what their local church offers in community, liturgy, and spiritual solace. Focusing overmuch on the satisfaction of these attenders may blind church analysts to the fact that they are studying a decreasing, and non-representative, Catholic population.

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Chapter 8
Scared into Church? Conceptions of God, Exclusivity, and Religious Practice in the United States

Christopher D. Bader and Ashley Palmer

Sociologists of religion recognize religiosity as a multi-dimensional construct that can be expressed in a variety of ways. According to early conceptualizations, religiosity includes five unique dimensions along which individuals vary: acceptance of religious doctrine, adherence to religious practices, understanding and awareness of official doctrine, religious experiences, and the practical impact of religion in the daily of life of the believer (Glock and Stark 1965; Stark and Glock 1968). More recent formulations have focused on the cognitive, behavioral and associative components by assessing religiosity according to belief, behavior and belonging (Green et al. 1996; Woodberry and Smith 1998; Green et al. 2007).

Considered collectively, these three dimensions can wield a substantive impact on various social outcomes. For example, affiliation and behavior combine to affect attitudes toward right-to-life issues in ways that neither tradition nor practice does independently. When examined exclusively in terms of affiliation, Catholics in general evince abortion and capital punishment attitudes in line with the "consistent life ethic." However, once they are distinguished according to frequency of mass attendance, the relationship between one's stance on abortion and capital punishment dissipates among Catholics who attend mass infrequently but increases among those who attend mass with high frequency (Perl and McClintock 2001). Thus it is not simply affiliation with the Catholic tradition that is important, but the combined effect of belonging to the faith and frequency of exposure to its doctrines.

In other instances, however, these three aspects of religiosity bear independent and sometimes opposing effects on various social outcomes. Perhaps the most commonly used indicators of religiosity – denomination, biblical literalism and church attendance – yield countervailing effects with respect to attitudes toward crime and punishment (Young 1992; Unnever et al. 2005a, b), tolerance toward homosexuals (Burdette

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et al. 2005), abortion decisions (Adamczyk 2008), and economic issues (Starks and Robinson 2009). Variation in the effects of these dimensions of religiosity indicates that different manifestations of religiosity do not necessarily yield parallel outcomes, and as such their connections with each other are not always clear.

Accordingly, the relationships among religious belief, behavior and belonging must be contextualized if they are to be understood. For instance, the effects of adherence to official religious doctrine and practice often covary with respect to social and moral attitudes and behaviors (Ellison and Sherkat 1993; Starks and Robinson 2009; Vaaler et al. 2009), reflecting the underlying impact of religious orthodoxy or traditionalism. In the context of a particular religious tradition, belief and behavior go hand in hand as reciprocal reinforcements of conformity to the religious culture.

However, other religious beliefs are not explicitly connected to religious practice through tradition. This is true for the sets of beliefs that comprise images of God, which vary across religious traditions (Bader and Froese 2005). Though ostensibly idiosyncratic, conceptions of God are developed in the context of a network of other religious beliefs and practices in which they make sense. Congregations may emphasize various aspects of God's character through the readings selected for the worship service, the way in which God is featured in the sermon, or the practices they associate with devotion and religiosity. Nevertheless, it remains unclear whether beliefs about the nature of God have a general relationship with other dimensions of religiosity including other beliefs and practices.

In this chapter, we explore the relationship between particular instances of two dimensions of religiosity – religious belief and practice. Specifically, we look at the consequences of one subset of religious beliefs, conceptions of God, on a host of religious practices, including church attendance, tithing, prayer, and scripture reading. We investigate this relationship within the context of a set of religious beliefs with that both images of God and religious practice have a theoretical link. Economic approaches to the study of religion posit a relationship between religious practice and exclusivity. According to the rational choice perspective, religious organizations that demand more of their members through strict or exclusive doctrines and norms of membership thrive by eliminating those who are less committed. As a result, such congregations should display above average levels of commitment in terms of religious practice.

Certain images of God, likewise, fall under the rubric of exclusivity. For example, holding a judgmental God concept would suggest belief in a deity who is more discriminating with respect to the attitudes and actions of believers. In this way, one's God concept may be part of a network of exclusive beliefs that ultimately influence religious practice. Accordingly, we posit that particular images of God will promote higher levels of religious practice when located in the context of a set of exclusive religious beliefs.

Images of God

Belief in God is arguably among the most fundamental or central religious beliefs a person can hold. After all, this belief is the sort of foundation upon which other religious beliefs build. Yet despite its centrality to religiosity, knowing that an

American believes in God tells us relatively little about her, for nearly all Americans (96%) report some level of belief in God.[1] What is more telling is *what* a person believes about God and what God's personality is presumed to be like.

God concepts provide us with a meaningful snapshot of a believer's religious worldviews. A person who believes in an impersonal cosmic force that is removed from worldly affairs has a fundamentally different conception of the spiritual realm from someone who thinks of God as a human-like being with the ability to feel love and become angered (Stark 2001). Greeley (1988, 1989, 1991, 1993, 1995); Stark (2001) and other sociologists have long noted the importance of God concepts in understanding the behaviors and attitudes of religious people. As Greeley (1995: 124) argues, "The central religious symbol is God. One's 'picture' of God is in fact, a metaphorical narrative of God's relationship with the world and the self as part of that world."

Several recent studies have indeed found conceptions of God to be significant predictors of both religious and non-religious behaviors. For example, holding a gracious image of God reduces the likelihood of support for capital punishment and of favoring harsher local courts, while belief in an angry God increases support for of capital punishment and general punitiveness (Evans and Adams 2003; Unnever et al. 2005a, b; Unnever et al. 2006; Unnever and Cullen 2006).

Another line of research regarding the influence of God concepts has focused upon two distinct dimensions of God's character: God's perceived level of engagement in the world and God's perceived level of judgment and anger (Bader and Froese 2005; Froese and Bader 2007, 2008; Froese et al. 2008; Mencken et al. 2009). Both images appear to be related to the belonging dimension of religiosity and also play a role in non-religious behaviors and attitudes. When God's anger and engagement are combined and conceptualized along a continuum, Bader and Froese (2005) find images of God to vary significantly by religious tradition, with Evangelicals tending toward the most active and authoritative images of God and Jews viewing God as a relatively distant and non-judgmental figure. Mencken et al. (2009) find a judgmental image of God to be significantly related to the distrust of neighbors, coworkers, atheists, and people in general, while Froese et al. (2008) find that God's judgment is also related to intolerant attitudes toward atheists, homosexuals, racists, and communists. Froese and Bader (2007) find that God's engagement and God's judgment are both significantly associated with the belief that God favors the United States in world affairs, but only God's judgment is related to the belief that God favors particular political parties.

While the impact of differing images of God has been widely examined in recent years, there has been little work exploring the relationship between images of God and religious *practice* more specifically. As a result, there is not an established theoretical link between these two forms of religiosity. However, images of

[1] A question on the Baylor Religion Survey (2005) asked respondents to indicate which of several statements comes closest to their personal beliefs about God. Responses were as follows: "I don't believe in anything beyond the physical world" (4.1%); "I believe in a higher power or cosmic force" (13.8%); "I sometimes believe in God" (1.6%); "I believe in God with some doubts" (10.2%); and "I believe in God with no doubts" (67.3%).

God are likely to correspond with other beliefs that have a clear theoretical link to practice – those regarding religious exclusivity.

The Economics of Religious Practice

According to the rational choice perspective on religion, religious exclusivity provides a reward and cost structure that promotes member commitment within religious groups (cf. Stark and Bainbridge 1987; Finke and Stark 1992; Iannaccone 1992, 1994; Stark and Finke 2000). Briefly summarized, this perspective argues that in addition to the rewards offered by religion, such as promises of eternal salvation, religious organizations vary in the types and extent of the costs they impose. Costs imposed by a religious organization could include strict behavioral requirements (such as forbidding the use of alcohol), time commitments (such as requirements to proselytize), psychic costs associated with outsiders believing group members to be deviant, monetary costs (required tithes or donations) as well as other restrictions or requirements. Such costs, Iannaccone (1995) argues, frighten away the marginally committed. Religious groups are motivated to place them upon their members such that only those willing to "pay" these costs – those most committed to the group – remain (Iannaccone 1994).

One of the key costs imposed by stricter religious groups is that of exclusivity (cf. Iannaccone 1995). Strict groups desire to monopolize their member's physical and spiritual resources, resulting in less ecumenical views toward religious alternatives. Rational choice theorists argue the by requiring an exclusive commitment and weeding out free-riders, strict groups should have a more committed membership with higher levels of practice (Iannaccone 1995; Stark and Finke 2000).

While religious exclusivity is communicated through beliefs about the nature of obtaining salvation and the validity of other faith traditions, exclusivity is also implied in the view of God that a religious organization promotes. As the central religious symbol, the way God is featured within the organization is emblematic of the religious worldview promoted therein. Religious organizations are likely to emphasize those aspects of God's character that reinforce the truth claims they promote. This would suggest that strict religious groups, which require an exclusive commitment from their membership, will depict God in terms that reflect an active concern with the proper behavior of believers. Accordingly, belief in an active and discerning God should be associated with higher levels of religious practice.

In fact, there is evidence to support this link. Bader and Froese (2005) find that church attendance increases with the belief that God is active and engaged and that this God concept likewise corresponds to affiliation with a conservative or strict denomination. However, because this research combines sets of beliefs regarding God's activity and engagement in the world with those about God's anger and judgment, it is not clear whether both aspects of God's character are equally important to religious practice. Does belief in a judgmental God reflect an exclusive theology that scares believers into church and encourages other manifestations of religiosity

through religious practice? Or rather, does belief in an engaged God correspond to higher levels of religious practice, perhaps indicating belief in a personal, interactive relationship with God?

In the following analyses, we separate these two dimensions of God's character in order to determine how particular conceptions of God are related to religious practice. In line with the theoretical expectation that exclusivity increases average levels of practice, we aim to discover whether images of God influence religious practice through their association with exclusivity. Accordingly, we first examine the relationship between engaged and judgmental God imagery and exclusive religious beliefs. We then test for a relationship between these God concepts and religious practice, asking whether exclusive religious beliefs mediate the link between these two aspects of religiosity.

Data

The data used in this study are from the first wave of the Baylor Religion Survey, collected in 2005. Using the General Social Survey as a model, the Baylor Religion Survey aims to collect data on American religion every two to three years. On a roughly bi-annual basis since 1972 the General Social Surveys (GSS) have provided a snapshot of American attitudes and beliefs regarding a host of different subjects. The GSS gathers these data using a combination of fixed content and rotating topic modules. However, in order to provide coverage of a wide variety of topics, the GSS has limited space to devote to any particular subject. Accordingly, religion has appeared as a topic module on the GSS only in 1991 and 1998. Although the Baylor Religion Survey (BRS) follows the general model of fixed content and rotating topic modules, its primary mission is to gather data on American religion, allowing in-depth exploration of topics of interests to religion scholars. For example, in addition to its considerable fixed content on religion, the 2005 BRS included topic models on paranormal beliefs, civic engagement, and trust. The 2005 Baylor Religion Survey is public, and may be downloaded free-of-charge from the Association of Religion Data Archives (www.thearda.com).

The content of the survey was developed by the Department of Sociology at Baylor University. The survey instrument was provided to the Gallup Organization, which used a mixed-mode method to gather responses. Potential respondents were contacted by telephone. Those who agreed to fill out the survey were mailed a booklet along with return postage. Ultimately Gallup gathered 1,721 respondents. (For further detail about the methodology behind the survey and how it compares to other national surveys, see Bader et al. 2007.)

The BRS data contain the content necessary for a deep examination of how religious beliefs and practices are related to personal conceptions of God. In addition to asking about levels of church attendance, the BRS includes questions on a host of other religious practices, including frequency of prayer, frequency of reading the Bible or other sacred books, frequency of saying grace or table prayers,

and the amount, if any, that the respondent tithes to his/her denomination. Further, the BRS includes items that tap notions of exclusivity, literalism, routes to salvation and the importance of converting others – beliefs that may prompt higher levels of practice.

Finally, nearly three-dozen survey items gathered detailed information about how each respondent conceives of God. These items allowed us to create two distinct measures of God's form and function – God's level of engagement in the world and God's level of judgment.

Conceptions of God

In addition to being asked whether or not they believe in God, respondents to the Baylor Religion Survey were asked to indicate how well a variety of adjectives such as "absolute," "severe," "loving," "motherly," "just," "kind," and several others describe God and to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement with a variety of statements about God's role in the world and general disposition. For example, respondents were asked how much they agree with the statement "God is…a He."

To create a measure of God's perceived level of engagement we examined responses to eight statements about God's personality: Six items ask respondents their level of agreement (on a five-point, Likert-type scale) with the following descriptions of God: "removed from worldly affairs," "concerned with the well-being of the world," "concerned with my personal well-being," "directly involved in worldly affairs," and "directly involved in my affairs." Two additional items ask respondents how well the adjectives "Distant" and "Ever-present" describe God: not at all, not very well, undecided, somewhat well, or very well. Items were flipped as necessary such that higher scores indicate higher levels of perceived engagement. We created a simple additive scale by adding responses together. The resulting scale, hereafter referred to as God's Engagement, ranged from 8 to 40 with a mean of 30.64 (alpha = 0.91). Americans tend to believe in a very engaged God (see Fig. 8.1), with relatively few respondents falling at the lower end of the scale and with the largest percentage (15.6%) of respondents receiving the highest score possible (40), indicating belief in a God that is actively engaged in world affairs and daily life.

We measured God's perceived level of judgment and anger by summing responses to six items. Respondents are asked if they agree that God is "angered by human sins," and "angered by my sins." They are also asked how well the adjectives "critical," "punishing," "severe," and "wrathful" describe God. As with the items regarding God's engagement, all items were on five-point, Likert-type scales. The final additive scale has an alpha of .85 with scores ranging from 6 to 30 and a mean of 17.04. Americans are much more divided with respect to God's anger (see Fig. 8.2). The largest percentage of Americans (11.6%) fall near the middle of scale, indicating either mixed beliefs about God's level of anger or judgment or perhaps the belief that God has the capacity to get somewhat angry at mankind.

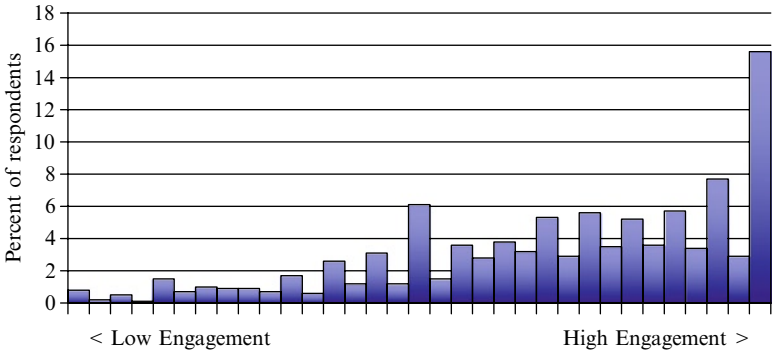

Fig. 8.1 God's Perceived Engagement: Baylor Religion Survey, Wave 1 (2005)

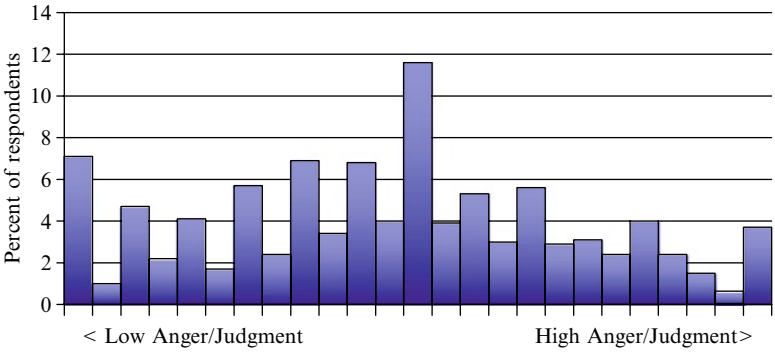

Fig. 8.2 God's Perceived Anger/Judgment: Baylor Religion Survey, Wave 1 (2005)

Control Variables

We included controls for key demographics in the analyses. Some controls were added as dichotomous variables including race (1 = white), marital status (1 = married) and gender (1 = female). Education is measured as highest degree acquired and includes 7 categories (8th grade or less, some high school, high school degree, some college, a trade or vocational degree, college graduate, and postgraduate degree). Age is entered as a numeric scale ranging from 18 to 93. We also controlled for family income using seven categories ranging from $10,000 a year or less to $150,000 a year or more. (For a detailed demographic breakdown of the BRS sample see Bader et al. 2007.)

In order to ensure that conceptions of God do not simply act as proxies for common measures of religious behavior and belief, we also controlled for a variety of religion measures in our analyses. Since Biblical literalism is known to have a strong impact on a wide variety of behaviors, beliefs and practices (Wilcox and Jelen 1990; Ellison and Musick 1993, 1995; Sherkat and Ellison 1997; Doktor 2002; Burdette

et al. 2005; Hoffmann and Johnson 2005; Tuntiya 2005), we included a control for the respondent's views regarding Biblical inerrancy. An item on the BRS asks respondents which of several statements comes closest to their personal view of the Bible: "The Bible is an ancient book of history and legends." "The Bible contains some human error." "The Bible is perfectly true, but it should not be taken literally, word-for-word. We must interpret its meaning." "The Bible means exactly what it says. It should be taken literally, word-for-word, on all subjects." This item was entered into analyses as a dichotomous variable contrasting those with a literal view of the Bible with others. Approximately one-fifth (22.3%) of respondents categorize themselves as Biblical literalists. We also controlled for levels of church attendance when attendance was not being used as a dependent variable. Church attendance ranges from 1 (never) to 9 (several times a week) with the average American attending about once a month (mean = 4.8).

Finally, we felt it important to control for the respondent's denomination/religious tradition, since previous research has shown conceptions of God to vary with denomination (Bader and Froese 2005). Steensland et al.'s RELTRAD typology (2000) categorizes denominations into larger religious traditions. We elected to use their conceptualization to create our denomination/religious tradition control that includes eight categories (see also Dougherty et al. 2007). The Evangelical Protestant category consists of (33.6%) of respondents affiliated with denominations that typically focus upon proselytization and are often conservative on theological and political issues, such as the Southern Baptist Convention, Assemblies of God and Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The Black Protestant category includes denominations such as African Methodist Episcopal Zion that, while theologically conservative, tend to be progressive on many social and economic issues. Five percent of respondents are affiliated with Black Protestant denominations. Catholics (21%) and Mainline Protestants (22%) claim about equal proportions of Americans religious believers. Mainline Protestant denominations include the Episcopal Church, Presbyterian USA and other denominations that tend to be more theologically liberal than Evangelicals and progressive on social issues. Approximately 3% (2.5%) of Americans consider themselves Jewish – which includes conservative, reform and liberal Jews, as well as Jews who may not practice but maintain a Jewish ethnic identity, and membership in a variety of smaller Jewish groups. Groups that do not fit within the Judeo-Christian tradition are placed in the "other" category, which includes about 5% of respondents. Respondents who are affiliated with Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam would fall into this category, as would members of novel religious movements such as the Church of Scientology. Finally, approximately 11% (10.8%) of respondents indicate that they have no religion. This category would include true atheists/materialists, but also includes people who are uncertain of their affiliation and people who consider themselves spiritual but not religious.

Religious tradition was entered into analyses as a series of dichotomous variables. Evangelical Protestants were used as the contrast category. Therefore, the coefficients for each religious tradition indicate how that particular tradition differs from Evangelical Protestants (if at all) on the outcome variable of interest.

Dependent Variables

Exclusivity

In order to examine how conceptions of God are related to exclusive religious beliefs, we used two different measures of theological exclusivity from the BRS. The first pertains to belief in who will be admitted into heaven. A person who believes that only his or her faith allows entry into Heaven holds a more exclusive view than someone who believes that many faiths offer potential avenues to the afterlife. The BRS asks respondents to estimate how many non-Christians will make it into Heaven using as possible responses: all, most, about half, a few, none, and no opinion. Approximately one-fourth of respondents (24.5%) do not believe that a non-Christian can get into Heaven (selecting the "none" category). In our analyses, we created a dichotomous variable, contrasting such respondents with others.

In addition, the BRS asks each respondent which of several statements about religious salvation comes closest to his or her personal views: "I do not believe in religious salvation," "many religions lead to salvation," and "my religion is the one/true faith that leads to salvation." In our analyses using this item we contrasted the approximately one-fifth (21%) of respondents who believe that only people in their religion will receive salvation with others. Together, these items will allow us to explore how conceptions of God are related to religious exclusivity.

Religious Practices

The Baylor Religion Survey also includes several different measures of religious participation, allowing us to perform an in-depth examination of how personal conceptions of God may be related to religious practices. Specifically, we will explore how conceptions of God are related to public behaviors such as religious service attendance and tithing, and such private behaviors including prayer, the saying of grace, and the reading of holy books.

As noted above church attendance was entered into analyses as an interval variable ranging from never (1) to several times a week (9).[2] Our tithing measure uses an item on the BRS that asks respondents "During the last year, approximately how much money did you and other family members in your household contribute to

[2]Previous research has found that survey respondents tend to over-report positive or normative behaviors and underreport undesirable behaviors (cf. Bradburn 1983; Presser and Traugott 1992). This is clearly evident in religion measures such as church attendance (cf. Hadaway et al. 1993; Hout and Greeley 1998; Woodberry 1998). There is little evidence however, that reported attendance varies systematically. In other words, men and women both tend to over-report their attendance as do people of varying ages and so on. To the extent that there is constant error in our measures they do not impact results in our statistical models (Finke et al. 2009).

your current place of worship?" There were twelve possible response categories starting with (1) under $500, (2) $500–$999 and then a series of $1,000 increments up until the final category of (12) $10,000 or more. On average, Americans report contributing between $1,000–$1,999 per year to their place of worship.

Each indicator of private religious practice used is measured as a frequency. Prayer was measured using an item that asks respondents how often they pray or meditate outside of religious services, with the following possible responses: never (1), only on certain occasions (2), once a week or less (3), a few times a week (4), daily (5), and several times a day (6). Using similar categories the BRS also asked respondents how often they participate in "table prayers" or grace before or after meals: never (1), only on certain occasions (2), at least once a week (3), at least once a day (4), or at every meal, (5). Finally we determine how often the respondent reads the Bible, Koran, Torah or other holy books outside of religious services, using the same set of categories as for church attendance, ranging from (1) never to several times a week (9).

Analytic Strategy

We examine the relationship between conceptions of God and religious exclusivity and religious practices with a series of regression models. First we perform a series of logistic regressions of our exclusivity measures on our demographic controls, religious controls and conceptions of God. These analyses will allow us to determine if God's perceived anger/judgment and/or God's perceived engagement increase the likelihood of holding exclusive religious beliefs, controlling for other factors. We next model the relationship between exclusivity and practice to determine whether there is a positive association between the two as suggested by the rational choice perspective. Finally, we conduct a series of OLS regression analyses to examine the connection between images of God, exclusivity and religious practice.

Findings

God and Exclusivity

Table 8.1 presents the results of a series of logistic regression analyses that examine how two measures of religious exclusivity are related to our basic demographic controls, religious tradition, religion controls and conceptions of God. We present odds ratios in the tables with standard errors in parentheses. Hence, a significant effect at 1 or above indicates that the parameter in question has a positive relationship with the outcome variable. A value lower than one (e.g., .75) indicates a negative relationship.

Table 8.1 Logistic regressions: conceptions of god and exclusivity. Baylor Religion Survey 2005[a]

	Non christians excluded from heaven?	Only one path to salvation?
Basic demographics		
Gender (1 = male)	1.343 (1.86)	1.408 (.181)*
Age	.989 (.006)*	.997 (.006)
Marital status (1 = married)	1.187 (.208)	.722 (.206)
Race (1 = white)	2.229 (.350)*	1.657 (.343)
Education	1.043 (.062)	1.034 (.060)
Family income	1.060 (.069)	1.030 (.067)
Religious tradition		
Black protestant	.840 (.507)	1.060 (.502)
Mainline protestant	.346 (.231)**	.473 (.245)**
Catholic	.101 (.309)**	.385 (.262)**
Jewish	.074 (1.343)*	.149 (1.322)
Other religion	.139 (.541)**	1.794 (.369)
No religion	3.040 (.425)**	–[b]
Religion controls		
Church attendance	1.357 (.042)**	1.387 (.043)**
Biblical literalism (1 = Literalist)	2.128 (.212)**	1.857 (.205)**
Conceptions of god		
God's engagement	1.096 (.019)**	1.090 (.019)**
God's anger	1.034 (.016)**	1.035 (.015)**
Constant	−6.954 (.891)**	−7.245 (.865)**
N	1203	1,265

[a] Logistic regression model with odds-ratios presented. Standard errors in parentheses. *p < .05; **p < .01

[b] The logistic regression did not achieve convergence with "nones" in the model

First we examine how our variables are related to the view that non-Christians will be excluded from Heaven. Several demographic factors have significant effects. For example, as age increases respondents become less likely to believe that only Christians have access to Heaven, indicating that older respondents are more ecumenical than younger respondents in this regard. Likewise, non-white respondents are more apt than white respondents to believe that the gates of heaven are open to non-Christians.

A key component of Evangelical Protestantism is theological conservatism, so it is not particularly surprising that, with two exceptions, other religious traditions are more forgiving of non-Christians. Mainline Protestants, Catholics, Jews and those of other religious traditions are all significantly less likely than Evangelicals to believe that non-Christians will be excluded from Heaven. Black Protestants, who also tend to be theologically conservative, are not significantly different from Evangelicals in this regard. Though these results fit with the expectations for the comparison between

Evangelicals and other religious traditions, what is most surprising is that "nones" are significantly more likely than Evangelicals to believe that non-Christians will be barred from heaven. Although seemingly counterintuitive, this outcome may reflect those in the unaffiliated category who are, in fact, conservative, non-denominational Christians (cf. Baker and Smith 2009a, b). Alternately, "nones" may be more likely than Evangelicals to indicate that non-Christians will be excluded from heaven simply because they do not believe that heaven exists at all and, accordingly, believe that no one will gain entry.

In conjunction with belief in selective admittance to heaven, beliefs regarding the nature of salvation also provide an indication of religious exclusivity. An exclusive religion will discourage members from believing that other religions or philosophies provide legitimate routes to salvation or the afterlife. In Model 2, we assess which factors are associated with the belief that one's religion is only one path to salvation. In contrast to belief regarding entrance into heaven, demographic factors are largely irrelevant to belief in soteriological exclusivity. Only gender has a significant impact, with males more likely than females to believe that there is only one way to achieve salvation. There are also fewer differences among religious traditions. In line with the expectations associated with theological conservatism, here again, Evangelical Protestants are more likely than Mainline Protestants and Catholics to believe that their religion provides the one, true path to salvation.

Justifying their inclusion as key religious control variables, both church attendance and Biblical literalism are significantly positively associated with exclusivity. The higher the frequency with which a respondent attends church and the holding of a literal perspective on the Bible each make one more likely to believe that non-Christians will be barred from Heaven and to believe that there is only one possible route to salvation.

Of greatest interest to the current enterprise are the results for conceptions of God. Even when controlling for religious tradition, church attendance, Biblical literalism and demographic characteristics, conceptions of God have a significant impact on religious exclusivity. Someone who believes in a God that is engaged with the world is more likely to believe that God has designated a single route to the afterlife, one that is reserved exclusively for Christians. God's anger has a similar effect – people who believe in a God who has the capacity to become angry and to judge human behaviors and decisions also tend to believe that one must follow a set path to get to Heaven, and that path is not open to non-Christians.

These results indicate a robust relationship between the God concepts examined and exclusive religious beliefs. In line with the expectations generated by the rational choice approach to religious practice, we next attempt to link these God concepts to religious practice through exclusive beliefs. The rational choice perspective would predict a positive relationship between exclusivity and practice based on the proposition that exclusive congregations eliminate free-riders leading to higher average levels of religious practice. Accordingly, we expect to find that engaged and judgmental God imagery – two God concepts that positively predict exclusivity – likewise positively correspond to religious practice. However, if these God concepts are related to practice as part of a network of exclusive beliefs, their

Table 8.2 Conceptions of god, exclusivity, and public religious practice. Baylor Religion Survey 2005[a]

	Church attendance		Tithing amount	
Basic demographics				
Gender (1 = male)	.00 (.131)	−.075 (.123)**	.08 (.151)**	.054 (.135)*
Age	.06 (.004)*	.068 (.004)**	.06 (.005)*	.049 (.004)
Marital status (1 = married)	.11 (.145)**	.126 (.139)**	−.01 (.166)	−.019 (.153)
Race (1 = white)	.01 (.220)	−.052 (.224)	.06 (.264)	.047 (.249)
Education	.09 (.076)**	.075 (.043)**	.03 (.088)	.046 (.047)
Family income	.01 (.049)	−.050 (.047)	.34 (.057)**	.323 (.053)**
Religious tradition				
Black protestant	.05 (.413)	.032 (.353)	.01 (.439)	−.000 (.370)
Mainline protestant	−.01 (.186)	.064 (.181)*	−.04 (.204)	−.033 (.191)
Catholic	.01 (.190)	.100 (.186)**	−.17 (.209)**	−.131 (.196)**
Jewish	−.03 (.510)	−.040 (.421)	−.01 (.594)	−.006 (.486)
Other religion	.01 (.309)	.016 (.304)	.01 (.343)	.057 (.330)*
No religion	−.22 (.273)**	−.298 (.244)**	.07 (.712)*	.056 (.719)*
Religion controls				
Church attendance	–	–	.41 (.037)**	.406 (.033)**
Biblical literalism	.20 (.178)**	.159 (.173)**	.00 (.194)	−.008 (.176)
Conceptions of god				
God's engagement	.39 (.011)**	–	.13 (.014)**	–
God's anger	.01 (.011)	–	−.02 (.013)	–
Exclusivity				
Non-christians excluded?	–	.247 (.173)**	–	.141 (.183)**
One path to salvation	–	.185 (.176)**	–	.049 (.176)
N	1,200	1,347	906	1,023
R^2	.430	.399	.383	.390

[a]OLS regression model with standardized coefficients presented. Standard errors in parentheses. *p < .05; **p < .01

effects should be mediated by the inclusion of exclusivity in our models. We test the proposed links below.

Religious Practices

We examine several different forms of religious practice including church attendance, tithing, prayer, reading of sacred texts, and the saying of grace. Table 8.2 first provides the results for the relationship between the variables of interest, conceptions of God and exclusivity, and public manifestations of religiosity. We present standardized regression coefficients (with standard errors in parentheses). Hence, coefficients can be directly compared within models such that larger coefficients indicate a more powerful effect upon the dependent variable.

Each pair of models shown varies only according to the alternate inclusion of conceptions of God or exclusivity. Accordingly, several similarities are evident with respect to the effect of the control variables included on public religiosity. With respect to church attendance, age and education are each associated with increased church attendance, and individuals who are married likewise attend with greater frequency. When controlling for exclusivity, men attend church at a lower rate than their female counterparts. However, when God imagery is held constant this relationship disappears, suggesting that the gender differential in church attendance is linked to gender differences in beliefs regarding God's engagement in the world.

A similar pattern is evident with respect to the effects of religious tradition on church attendance. The model controlling for exclusivity shows that once beliefs about entrance to heaven and salvation are held constant, Mainline Protestants and Catholics attend church with *greater* frequency than Evangelical Protestants, while religious "nones" attend less frequently. However, when controlling for conceptions of God, only the difference between the unaffiliated and Evangelicals appears. Neither exclusivity nor conceptions of God account for the effects of belief in a literal interpretation of scripture, however, which is associated with increased rates of attendance net of each set of controls.

Of the demographic factors related to church attendance, age and gender are also associated with the second form of public religiosity examined, tithing. In this instance however, gender is consistently associated with giving, with males tending to indicate a greater tithe, while age is associated with increased tithing only in the presence of controls for God concepts. In addition to these demographic controls, family income is likewise related to tithing, with those of wealthier backgrounds reporting a larger amount in tithe. Regarding the religious controls included, Catholics and the religiously unaffiliated report giving less than Evangelical Protestants, while those belonging to other faith traditions report greater tithing only net of exclusivity. Whereas biblical literalism was strongly related to church attendance, it does not bear on tithing. However, church attendance is strongly associated with tithing, exerting the largest effect in both models.

Table 8.3 presents a series of OLS regressions for private religious behaviors. As with attendance and tithing, the results for our control variables are idiosyncratic. Although several demographic factors are related to the frequency of reading a sacred text, few are related to either private prayer or table prayers, and none of the demographic variables is related to all three forms of private religiosity. Compared with women, men report lower frequencies of both prayer and scripture reading. Both measures of private religiosity are also negatively related to family income, but positively associated with age. Meanwhile, white respondents report saying grace and reading a sacred text less frequently than non-whites, while those with greater educational attainment report higher levels of scriptural reading. Of these measures of private religiosity, basic demographics best predict reading the Bible. With the exception of marital status, every demographic control is significantly associated with the frequency of reading holy books.

With regard to religious tradition, mainline Protestants appear to be less involved in private religious practice than Evangelicals, reporting significantly lower levels

Table 8.3 Conceptions of god, exclusivity, and private religious practice. Baylor Religion Survey 2005[a]

	Prayer/meditation		Grace/table prayers		Reading holy books	
Basic demographics						
Gender (1 = Male)	−.13 (.073)**	−.169 (.074)**	−.01 (.067)	.001 (.062)	−.05 (.116)*	−.064 (.108)**
Age	.06 (.002)**	.054 (.002)*	−.01 (.002)	−.010 (.002)	.08 (.004)**	.069 (.003)**
Marital status (1 = married)	−.03 (.081)	.006 (.084)	.02 (.075)	.039 (.071)	−.02 (.129)	−.006 (.123)
Race (1 = white)	−.03 (.122)	−.041 (.134)	−.07 (.111)*	−.075 (.111)**	−.06 (.194)**	−.057 (.195)*
Education	.03 (.042)	.014 (.026)	.03 (.038)	.040 (.021)	.04 (.067)*	.028 (.037)
Family income	−.06 (.027)*	−.101 (.028)**	.01 (.025)	−.024 (.024)	−.08 (.043)**	−.089 (.041)**
Religious tradition						
Black protestant	.02 (.229)	−.025 (.210)	.05 (.201)	.080 (.173)**	−.02 (.365)	.042 (.307)
Mainline protestant	−.06 (.103)*	−.095 (.108)**	−.08 (.091)**	−.090 (.089)**	−.13 (.164)**	−.127 (.158)**
Catholic	−.03 (.105)	−.061 (.111)*	−.10 (.094)**	−.107 (.091)**	−.26 (.167)**	−.256 (.163)**
Jewish	−.05 (.283)	−.042 (.251)	−.01 (.256)	−.012 (.214)	−.01 (.451)	−.012 (.367)
Other religion	.06 (.171)*	.026 (.181)	.04 (.153)	.010 (.147)	−.01 (.273)	−.004 (.265)
No religion	−.09 (.157)**	−.247 (.154)**	−.04 (.173)	−.081 (.169)**	−.06 (.246)*	−.109 (.223)**
Religion controls						
Church attendance	.28 (.016)**	.364 (.016)**	.42 (.014)**	.385 (.014)**	.48 (.026)**	.465 (.024)**
Biblical literalism	.046 (.101)	.060 (.104)*	.13 (.089)**	.120 (.084)**	.14 (.161)**	.103 (.0153)**
Conceptions of god						
God's engagement	.39 (.006)**	–	.12 (.006)**	–	.13 (.010)**	–
God's anger	.00 (.006)	–	.04 (.006)	–	.04 (.010)	–
Exclusivity						
Non-christians excluded?	–	.042 (.106)	–	.095 (.088)**	–	.102 (.155)**
One path to salvation	–	.099 (.107)**	–	.089 (.086)**	–	.083 (.157)**
N	1,196	1,342	1,069	1,207	1,200	1,347
R^2	.544	.446	.396	.392	.578	.576

[a] OLS regression model with standardized coefficients presented. Standard errors in parentheses. *p < .05; **p < .01

of prayer, grace and the reading of holy books. Catholics are not different from Evangelicals in terms of prayer, but also say grace and read holy books less often.

Given that church attendance is itself a measure of religious practice, it is perhaps not surprising that it is significantly related to other practices. In fact, attendance is one of the few consistent predictors of religious practice. The more often one attends religious services, the more often he or she will tend to pray outside of services, say grace at meals and read holy books. The effects for Biblical literalism are less consistent. Holding a literal view of the Bible does not appear to make one more likely to pray, although literal views of the Bible are associated with more frequent reading of it and more frequent saying of grace.

Examining the results for public and private religious practice collectively, two important trends emerge with respect to exclusivity and images of God. Regarding the former, exclusivity has a relatively robust relationship with religious practice such that with increasing theological exclusivity, individuals evince higher levels of religious practice. Both measures of exclusivity employed significantly predict religious practice with two exceptions, in which only one indicator of theological exclusivity bears on the dependent variable. Although the belief that non-Christians will be excluded from heaven is associated with increased tithing, exclusivity with regard to religious salvation is not. The reverse is true with respect to prayer: belief that one's own religion is the only path to salvation increases frequency of prayer, though an exclusive view of heaven is unrelated to this form of practice.

A surprising but consistent finding emerges when examining how conceptions of God relate to religious practice. Whether practice is conceptualized as public behavior such as church attendance or tithing or as private behavior such as prayer and the reading of holy books, believing in an engaged God is a significant, positive predictor. In all models the more engaged the respondent perceives God to be, the more vigorous his or her religious practice. Indeed, belief in an engaged God is the most powerful predictor of church attendance and frequency of prayer – and remains significant in the presence of key religion controls.

But if the effect of God's engagement is omnipresent in the prediction of religious practices, the impact of God's anger and judgment is entirely absent. Belief in an engaged God is a constant and significant predictor across all religious practices, whereas God's anger/judgment is not significant in any models predicting religious practice. This suggests that, although belief in a judgmental God may be part of a network of beliefs that relate to religious exclusivity, this particular belief does not directly influence religious practice.

While the analyses in Tables 8.2 and 8.3 have looked for a direct link between belief and practice, the final set of analyses shown in Table 8.4 assesses the proposition that conceptions of God are connected to practice *through* exclusivity. Each model includes both conceptions of God and measures of exclusivity, which can be compared with those shown above to determine the nature of the relationships among these variables and religious practice.

The effects for conceptions of God and exclusivity largely mirror those found when each set of belief variables is entered individually. As above, exclusivity in

Table 8.4 OLS regressions: conceptions of god, exclusivity and religious practice. Baylor Religion Survey 2005[a]

	Church attendance	Tithing amount	Prayer/meditation	Grace/table prayers	Reading holy books
Basic demographics					
Gender (1 = Male)	−.023 (.126)	.084 (.149)**	−.124 (.073)**	−.006 (.066)	−.057 (.114)**
Age	.073 (.004)**	.079 (.005)**	.051 (.002)*	−.014 (.002)	.087 (.004)**
Marital status (1 = Married)	.098 (.140)**	−.022 (.164)	−.025 (.082)	.027 (.074)	−.025 (.127)
Race (1 = White)	−.033 (.218)	.047 (.261)	−.039 (.127)	−.083 (.112)**	−.055 (.197)*
Education	.082 (.043)**	.040 (.051)	.018 (.025)	.049 (.022)	.047 (.039)**
Family income	−.008 (.047)	.322 (.056)**	−.053 (.027)*	−.006 (.025)	−.083 (.043)
Religious tradition					
Black protestant	.031 (.392)	.009 (.431)	.033 (.228)	.066 (.197)*	−.001 (.354)
Mainline protestant	.066 (.181)*	−.006 (.205)	−.046 (.105)	−.056 (.093)	−.101 (.164)**
Catholic	.099 (.188)**	−.114 (.215)**	−.018 (.110)	−.061 (.097)*	−.220 (.170)**
Jewish	−.009 (.418)	.003 (.510)	−.002 (.243)	.012 (.218)	.006 (.377)
Other religion	.021 (.307)	.049 (.354)	.050 (.178)*	.034 (.155)	.006 (.277)
No religion	−.171 (.270)**	.074 (.738)**	−.107 (.162)**	−.046 (.179)	−.058 (.247)*
Religion controls					
Church attendance	–	.377 (.038)**	.270 (.017)**	.368 (.015)**	.442 (.026)**
Biblical literalism	.125 (.180)**	−.016 (.197)	.041 (.106)	.114 (.091)**	.112 (.164)**
Conceptions of god					
God's engagement	.311 (.011)**	.091 (.015)**	.368 (.007)**	.095 (.006)**	.092 (.010)**
God's anger	.003 (.011)	−.027 (.013)	−.008 (.006)	.048 (.006)	.025 (.010)
Exclusivity					
Non-christians excluded?	.177 (.178)**	.145 (.200)**	.006 (.105)	.064 (.093)*	.108 (.163)**
One path to salvation	.164 (.179)**	.050 (.191)	.072 (.106)**	.094 (.091)**	.082 (.164)**
N	1,191	903	1,186	1,062	1,191
R^2	.468	.396	.532	.401	.588

[a] OLS regression model with standardized coefficients presented. Standard errors in parentheses. *p < .05; **p < .01

religious belief increases the frequency of the religious practices modeled. Likewise, belief in an engaged God bears positively on practice, while belief in a judgmental God remains inconsequential. While belief in an engaged God continues to exert a strong, positive effect as demonstrated previously, these results further indicate that belief in an engaged God is partially mediated by theological exclusivity. Once exclusivity is included, the magnitude of the effect of belief in an engaged God is slightly attenuated. Thus the effect of engaged God imagery on religious practice appears to be both direct and indirect, while judgmental God imagery is related to practice only vis-à-vis its relation to exclusive theology.

Discussion

Although both are understood to fall under the umbrella of religiosity, religious belief and behavior represent distinct dimensions of this larger concept. In assessing the relation between these two dimensions, we have conceptualized God imagery as a manifestation of religious belief and public and private religious practice as indicators of religious behavior. A growing body of research has found conceptions of God to be related to a variety of religious and non-religious behaviors and beliefs (Greeley 1989, 1993; Ozorak 2003; Bader and Froese 2005; Unnever et al. 2005a, b; Unnever and Cullen 2006; Unnever et al. 2006; Froese and Bader 2007, 2008; Froese et al. 2008; Mencken et al. 2009). This research tends to suggest that beliefs regarding God's character are logically, cognitively connected to other beliefs and behaviors. That is, individuals consciously translate their beliefs about the nature of God into appropriately corresponding actions, such that belief in a loving God leads to greater social trust (Mencken et al. 2009) or greater compassion for criminals (Unnever et al. 2005a, b), for example.

However, individuals' beliefs and ideas do not often cleanly translate into religious action; "Rather, people's religious ideas and practices generally are fragmented, compartmentalized, loosely connected, unexamined, and context dependent" (Chaves 2010: 2). As comparisons between black Protestants and white Evangelicals indicate, groups may draw on the same theology or set of beliefs but act on them in disparate ways (see Chaves 2010). Thus beliefs themselves do not straightforwardly inspire action. Even groups that subscribe to a literal interpretation of the Bible may emphasize seemingly contradictory elements of the scriptures.

On a basic level, our results support the contention that belief and action often do not neatly cohere. Although fear of God's reprisal might logically or reasonably motivate religious behavior, we find that belief in an angry and judgmental God does not, in fact, inspire public or private religious practice. Rather than arguing for increased practice as a "logical" outcome of particular God concepts, we have instead attempted to link religious belief and practice through the context of theological exclusivity. Informed by the theoretical expectations associated with the rational choice perspective that exclusivity increases average levels of practice, we

have examined whether images of God influence religious practice through their association with exclusivity.

In general, our results support the proposed links among God concepts, exclusivity and practice. Both angry and engaged conceptions of God are positively associated with exclusive theological beliefs, which in turn lead to increased religious practice. When examined simultaneously, exclusivity and belief in an engaged God both have a positive, direct effect on practice. Belief in a judging God, however, is not directly significant. In the latter analyses, the effect of belief in an engaged God is somewhat diminished by the inclusion of exclusive religious beliefs. In some instances, it is also the case that the effects for exclusive beliefs are slightly attenuated with the inclusion of controls for conceptions of God. Altogether, this indicates that the effects of conceptions of God on practice are partially accounted for by the relationship between exclusivity and practice. Belief in an angry or judgmental God is related to religious practice only via exclusivity, which also partially mediates the influence of belief in an engaged God.

However, our findings also indicate that holding an image of a God who is engaged in the world directly influences practice net of the two exclusive beliefs controlled. It is possible that with the inclusion of additional measures of exclusivity, such as congregational strictness, the effect of engaged God imagery on religious practice would be more fully accounted for. Engaged God imagery is likely to be more prevalent in charismatic or Pentecostal contexts, for example, both of which would be characterized by exclusivity, strictness and above average levels of practice.

But if belief in an engaged God is only partially related to exclusivity in the present analyses, this belief measure may alternately be understood as proxy for other religious costs associated with sacrifice and stigma that are thought to increase religious practice (see Iannaccone 1992). For example, belief in a God who is actively engaged in the world as well in one's own life could manifest in ways that lead outsiders to label the individual as deviant. Such believers may talk openly about personal conversations with God or miracles they have seen God perform, potentially stigmatizing themselves among the uninitiated.

In sum, what this tells us is that the effect of belief on practice is complex. People are not simply scared into church, frightened of displeasing a vengeful God. Rather, religious practice is better understood through its relation to religious exclusivity and engaged God imagery. An exclusive theology is one mechanism through which religious organizations eliminate free-riders. Retaining only the most committed members ultimately leads to greater organizational vitality through higher average levels of religious practice, such as church attendance and tithing. But clearly the most powerful effect on religious practice is the belief that God is engaged in the world. While individuals may attend church, pray and otherwise practice because they believe that someone will be listening when they do so, their conceptions of God are likely to exist in a context in which a network of exclusive beliefs and costly behaviors function to promote religiosity through practice.

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Chapter 9
Spiritual Life in Modern Japan: Understanding Religion in Everyday Life

Andrea Molle

The purpose of this chapter is to present some of the various religious practices in the everyday life of Japanese people. Being myself primarily concerned with the peculiar issue of diffused spirituality and its relation to everyday practices, with particular attention to life-shaping or violence aspects, I am especially interested to show how these practices would theoretically relate to the sociological dimension of Japanese religions as well as to the pragmatic claims of their practitioners.

In recent years, many observers point to an increasing secularism among the Japanese population and bemoan the fact that younger Japanese exhibit virtually no interest in Shintō or traditional Buddhist schools while, according to other scholars, Japan must still be described as something of a museum of living religions or as widespread religiosities as ever. Both these observations are valid and supported by evidence. In Japan, where organized religion is increasingly viewed with a critical eye, one of the country's most enduring social features is its tendency toward spiritual practices in many settings of everyday life – from professional to social, and even during leisure time.

Such diffused spirituality is an underestimated though important element of Japanese culture, and it shows itself readily in many aspects of everyday life. The average Japanese typically follows ritual ceremonies like birth, weddings and funerals and may visit a shrine or temple on New Year or participates at local festivals (*matsuri*), most of which have a serious religious background. The same person may have a wedding at a Christian church and have a funeral at a Buddhist temple; Japanese streets in every city are decorated on *Tanabata* (Summer Festival), *Obon* (Day of the Dead), Christmas, and so on.

If one attempts to measure religiosity in Japan according to how well individuals conform to widely accepted religious indexes in the West (such as frequency of attendance, scripture-reading, prayer, etc.), religions seem not to play a big role in

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the everyday life of most Japanese people. However, I would argue that this explanation is dominant only because a unique historical situation in most Western countries, namely secularization in the United States and Europe, is often assumed as the basis for structural arrangements between society and religion all over the world.

The matter of the relation between religion and everyday practices in Japan is jeopardized by this central theoretical issue. One of the most influential arguments in sociology is that religious pluralism will lead to secularization, and a good deal of attention has been focused on applying this paradigm to the area of Asian studies. I would reject this conclusion as overly deterministic. It is true that in Western countries religion generally has come to be institutionally specialized for societies that are marked by a high degree social stratification, and structural complexity is leading to secularization. However, the continued emphasis on the secularization of religious identities in Asia cannot be supported by such a simple unilinear and universal model. Not only do most of the theories of secularization in Europe and the United States not follow such a straight theoretical line, but there is also broad agreement among scholars in Asian studies that secularization is not a major process here. Rather, both secularizing and sacralizing dynamics have been at work in the discourse of Asian religiosity. A solid body of research has argued for the importance of a variety of different causal factors in the continued relationship between religion and society in Japan. These arguments vary widely in their specific foci, but most indicate that religious pluralism contributes to religious identity in the country.

In spite of these, the very idea of secularization has left its imprint on the sociological view of religion and subsequently often clouds our view of religious consciousness in Japanese society, where the structural consistency of the religious worldview connects sacred realities with mundane practices in a very specific way (Luckmann 1979). Such theoretical discomfort has been followed in the sociological literature by a miscellany of provisional statements about Japanese religiosity like "popular religion," "folk religiosity," "syncretism," "superstition," and so on – terms that can make any specialist in the study of Asian cultures upset when poorly or inappropriately used (see Goody 1996). Employing these provisional categories, many scholars also often presume incorrectly that Japan is a *sociological unicum* by claiming the "real Yamato" is a "fantasy country" that survives hidden in the deepest side of it, waiting to be discovered (Berger 1983).

Spirituality is nevertheless also one of the most currently debated categories by scholars working on Japanese society (King 1996; Houtman and Aupers 2005). Still too often considered as a residual category in other fields, "spirituality" is instead a valuable tool to capture a range of concepts and dimensions of Japanese religious culture and have spread in recent years to reach and influence a global audience (Shimazono 1999). Space does not allow me to take up a systematic treatment of this issue here. My point is only that spirituality in Japan may appear in some respects to be a paradoxical research topic, at least from some points of view. Nevertheless, however interpreted, its sociological significance is beyond doubt.

A Nation Without Religion or a Nation with Many Symbiotic Spiritualities?

As pointed out by Thomas Luckmann (1979), every sociological analysis of religiosity in modern societies should begin by specifying the general social conditions for the interactions between the various aspects of religious consciousness. Sometimes described as "a nation without a religion," Japan is a highly complex field for comparative sociological studies. From a sociolinguistic standpoint, we note that the Japanese language did not even have a native term that characterized such a separate sphere of human activity, in the sense of sociological theory, or even a cognitive link to a universal concept of religion of which Shintō or Buddhism could be seen as a Japanese local variant. Historically speaking, "religion" was thus a completely novel concept that the Japanese gained especially thanks to cultural contacts established during the last two centuries. In details, the conception was evolved in the vision of the Western conception of the nation-state, when Japanese intellectuals attempted to accept the concepts lying behind this word, though there was no proper Japanese equivalent for it (Yamaguchi 2005). To ordinary people, part of the problem is cognitive: the very meaning of the word "religion" is problematic Even today, although religion seems so closely intertwined with Japanese daily life, few profess "religious belief," as they see "religion" as something alien.

According to various surveys of people's religious beliefs conducted by the mass media, approximately one-fourth of those interviewed respond that they have "no religion." Such surveys, in which the majority of Japanese claim to lack religious conviction, also show that even self-confessed unbelievers engage in religious/spiritual practices. Other evidences show that spiritual practices are widespread, while metaphysical speculation is weak, and the same surveys show that Japanese attitudes toward religiosity are highly pragmatic. This claim is also well supported by simple figures: when one adds together the membership figures for the various religious groups in Japan the total comes to about nearly twice the population of the entire country!

In comparison to other major world countries, Japan also displays another quite different feature. To claim to have a personal spirituality and to believe truly in supernatural beings are two distinct things, especially in the sense that many of those whom we might call "unbelievers" (to be more precise, those who claim "not to have any personal deity") may in one way or the other have some spiritual beliefs related to very particular rituals and practices.

If we attempt to analyze Japan from a either a doctrinal or a ritual angle we must note the Japanese have parceled out such ritual activities among various religions (traditional, modern or foreign). If we see these customs in the light of the increase of personal spirituality, however vague those issues might be, it does indeed manifest a wider trend indicating a more positive attitude toward performative actions that in one way or another can be called spiritual or, at least, opening the way to spiritual feelings. For example, the primary relationship most

Japanese have with Buddhism is through funerals and mortuary rites, which explains the popularity of home altars (*butsudan*), since they are dedicated to the souls of deceased family members. Thus, most Japanese associate ceremonies of birth and child development with Shintō, as in the case of *shichi-go-san* (literally "seven, five, three"), a day of prayer for the healthy growth of young children: On the 15th of November, boys and girls aged three, boys aged five and girls aged seven, visit a Shinto shrine with their parents. Girls traditionally wear a *kimono* when making their visit, while boys wear *haori* jackets and *hakama* trousers. In recent years, though, an increasing number of children are wearing Western-style dresses and suits. Also weddings are currently a hybrid. While there are Buddhist services celebrating marriage, they are rare. Marriage in modern Japan is a highly commercial performance, often held at one the world's most ornate marriage halls where couples may first be married in "traditional" costume according to Shintō ritual, then change into Western wedding clothes for receptions and cake-cutting ceremonies. Some also go through Christian or Christian-like-ceremonies sometimes performed in Christian churches, whether or not the couples are Christian. When such a network of spiritual symbols is formed and grounded on a perceived factual knowledge, it becomes potentially accessible to everyone, and it does not matter if there is no actual connection with the origin – what matters is that the image is stable, understandable, usable, and defensible.

The few examples presented above indicate a solid trend toward participation in spiritual-related behaviors or rituals rather than in established religions themselves. According to Charles Taylor (1989: 43), making a choice about how live our lives is often grounded on "connecting one's life up to some greater reality or story." Usually, the process of identification with spiritual meanings starts through becoming a member of a group that claims to embody and promote them. The Japanese case appears to be different. There thus appears to be a notable tendency in the Japanese population as a whole to remain aloof from religious groups and yet still maintain religious sentiments, worldviews and practices (Nakamura 1997), which is also consistent with Hanegraaff's analysis of the New Age movement (1998), wherein the individual's sense of personal faith takes apart religious boundaries.

Many forms of personal religiosity or spirituality clearly offer solutions to individual and family problems that may seem to observers to be more or less arbitrary. On the whole, these are often based on an assessment of one's current life situation, which is worked out by the various techniques of divination. Such techniques range from the simple drawing of a fortune ticket or fortune-slip at a Shintō shrine or even a Buddhist temple, to the employment of a specialist in astrology, calendars, horoscopes or palmistry, to the acceptance of a new religion or a holistic therapy. How is spiritual practice understood to work? And how are other actions such as praying for success in examinations by means of a votive tablet (*ema*), or using a charm to heal from a cancer, thought to assist in getting results? Not all of these questions can be answered here, but I will underline some of the distinctive aspects of Japanese spirituality as they emerge from particularly significant cases including politics, popular culture, sports, and medicine.

Empirical Evidences of Everyday Diffused Spirituality in Japan

Contemporary Japanese society's attitudes toward public issues are formed in dialogue with print, broadcast and electronic media, which occupy most of the public sphere in any modern society (Habermas 1989). In a society strongly influenced by Confucianism, a quite different understanding of the proper relation between spheres from those in the West shapes the development of civil society. In fact, many of these networks were formed through religious organizations. The history of Japanese civil society is marked by determined religious intervention. To go beyond the historical finding that religious organizations have been founded following rhythms seen widely in Japan's associational life, it is important to be able to assess religions' positions on the issues discussed by civil society's – institutions.

Many studies of changes in religions' peace activism demonstrated how mainstream media attention can fluctuate, and media coverage or lack of it is a major factor shaping ordinary society's knowledge and understanding. Japanese religions' peace activism today is conducted with a new confidence that comes from being aligned with the majority and from being able to assert confidently that peace is a central value both of religion and of society as a whole a factor that both unites religion and society, and also qualifies religionists to assert their secular or symbolic leadership (Hardacre 2004).

Examples additionally come from sports. Shrines close to places where the national teams had their camps or close to the stadiums were extremely busy during the World Cup in Korea/Japan. Supporters crowded *Ashio-sha* in Aichi-ken, where the "Soccer god" is worshipped, and *Yatagarasu Jinja* in Nara-ken, where a stone statue of 90 cm – *Yatagarasu* with a soccer ball on its head – can be found, to pray for the success of their team. The *Yatagarasu* is a *kami* (god) in the form of a bird that can be found on the Japan national team emblem and uniform. It is a large bird that appears in Japanese mythology – an appearance of the god *Kamotaketsunumi no mikoto*, sent by *Amaterasu Omikami* to guide Emperor Jinmu when he was lost on Mt. Kumano. It is said that this was adopted as the emblem of the Japanese national team because the founder of Japanese soccer was from the area near *Kumano Nachi* shrine. The World Cup saw the appearance of *ema* and *omamori* (talismans) officially sanctioned by the Japan Soccer Association. The Troussier shrine made its appearance in Shibuya – a place for prayers to Troussier (the national team coach from 1998 to 2002), who is seen as the one who turned the Japanese squad into a world-class team. It has a *torii* (gate), and the *shintai* (representation of the god) is a golden soccer ball. Messages could be left in a box, much like a collection box at a shrine, or fans could record their messages of support, to be delivered to Troussier (Maekawa 2002, 2003).

Another example of the prominent role of religiosity in modern Japan is the fact that pilgrimages and memorial services still massively attract the attention of general audiences in Japan. From October 2004 to September 2005 they were held in many parts of Japan, in observance of the sixtieth anniversary of Japan's defeat in World War II, the tenth anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, as well

as the tenth anniversary of Aum Shinrikyō's sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway system (Tsujimura 2006). There was a plethora of television programs and magazine articles on the topic of strange, psychic or paranormal phenomena, and for a while after a "poltergeist" affair, there was another wave of such reporting. The attention over a poltergeist in a small Gifu town is a good example of a case where the mass media, such as television stations and magazines, took the lead, inflated the affair, and then mediums rushed in to offer their services. It thus reflects another aspect of spirituality in Japan in terms of the fashions and popular culture.

Although many of these claims are quite creative (Friday 2005; Muromoto 1998), even martial arts, as Bennett (2005) points out, are linked to religious beliefs, and some have their own spiritual code of honor. Martial arts are often connected with the issue of "spirituality" and also, in a wider sense, to a very specific concept of "spiritual life" elaborated by various martial arts practitioners. According to several scholars, martial arts are factually perceived as a form of spiritual practice that combines different issues: physical, psychological, social and spiritual.

Healing, similarly, is one of the central concerns of everyday religious practices. In Japan it is commonplace for new religious groups to place strong emphasis on healing experiences as they build their membership and then, as they become increasingly established, to turn to the intellectual refinement of their teachings and doctrine. Tenrikyō, one of the most classic new religions, in its early years attracted new believers primarily through its reputation for curing sickness, but with growing social acceptance it gradually moved this rather unsophisticated element into the background and shifted its interests to the construction of modern hospitals and schools. The tendency in these religious movements has been to avoid the word "healing." The word "salvation" is preferred, even when the curing of sickness is involved.

"Vitalistic salvation" is a key concept to understanding New Religions in Japan. In most groups it is not simply supposed to be a gift from a god nor is it a purely mechanical practice. It also entails ethical action on the part of the follower. Moreover, many of the New Religions are characterized by strong traditional ethical beliefs that are closely related to the vitalistic salvation worldview (Nagai 1995). Generally speaking, salvation suggests, to a greater extent than healing does, that the approach involved is an intellectual one based on doctrinal and practical grounds. Salvation occurs precisely because one has experienced a healing that picks up the scattered fragments of everyday life and shapes them again into a single story, filling up the void left by meaninglessness.

Conclusions

What do these examples tell us about everyday "spiritual" experience in Japan? If we are not distracted by thinking about absolute cognitive, linguistic, or even cultural distinctions, what is sociologically fascinating is that these examples show large-scale processes that can scarcely be assessed in any direct way by simply referring to "secularization" theory.

Generally speaking, we can start by analyzing the way the concepts of "traditional education" and "spiritual" appear in these examples. In a cross-analysis involving both Japanese and non-Japanese statements, the "self-empowerment" implied in these examples is a common ground between "educational," "cultural" and "spiritual" issues. A more rigorous analysis of the examples shows that both uses are prompted by a discussion of the need for change within the society rather than unearthly issues. "Self-empowerment" is used to justify both "spiritual research" and "cultivational" goals in a worldly social context. Indeed, the Japanese use "education" outside the didactic context of hierarchical relationships, in the sense of "cultivating" something which is both personal (inner strength, persistency, focusing) and social (empathy, harmony, social networks). So, the verb "to cultivate" makes the "spiritual dimension" much more strongly related to any social institution that provides a self-spiritual environment with value coherence. Therefore, "spirituality" seems to be socially constructed, transmitted by "education" and reinforced by "cultivation" in a wider social context, more than what a superficial analysis may recognize.

In my own research on martial arts in Japan I did not come across any instances where these concepts were not used with reference to this peculiar framework, although the functions and degree to which they are central to it display some differences. Spirituality is overall described as a form of communication in which everyday practices are a metaphor of the interactions that take place in the whole society, and in any case provides some kind of religious teachings.

Sociological theories and perspectives on spirituality in Japan could have sometimes valuably emphasized more strongly individual-related factors rather than the social contexts in which they are actually taking place. There is a first-level individual (performative) dimension that consists of personal actions; behind this there is a more powerful cognitive (transformative) process that leads to the creation of an interpersonal network reinforced through several emotional mechanisms. On the individual level we have the problem of mind and body separation, and in sociological terms, this is evidence supporting the "subjectivization thesis" (Heelas and Woodhead 2005). The interpersonal level is no less important here inasmuch as when society grows ever more competitive and information-intensive, human relations get weaker and weaker. The freedom gained by breaking away from close-knit human relationships is accompanied by a chronic sense of loneliness. Nonetheless, the individual and interpersonal dimensions do not yet complete the movement toward spiritual-related everyday practice, but open it up to the third level.

None of these processes takes place in a sociological vacuum but rather in conjunction with a complex set of social and cultural elements. In other words, the processes of identification and transformation take place in a web of performative meanings that guarantees this social recognition the way that Berger and Luckmann (1966) have characterized "institutionalization." The social actor should not try to separate totally from society: he or she must share some common values within the society. At the same time the main role of the social audience is to legitimate the point, when the individual has taken the attributes that the martial arts are supposed to ascribe to it. This feedback is made possible only by the mainstream nature of the

spiritual value espoused in the everyday practices. If these values were totally alien or weird, there would be no concrete way for society to react.

Whether or not "secularization theory" still provides the rubrics for explaining religion's disappearance from most political discourse in Japan, it does not suggest an explanation for personal religiosity nor for the continued formation of religious organizations or their social activism, nor for the continued salience of the older, established religious organizations. The whole complex of spiritual action relating to daily concerns must be taken into account in the analysis. Without an understanding of the power of doctrine or teachings in the belief structures of individuals and communities, it is impossible to understand why so many could assent to and actively support everyday spiritual practice. However, I would suggest that, inasmuch as doctrinal systems themselves make explicit the embedded social and institutional value systems, we need to examine closely the way in which the individuals participating in these systems understand and adapt them, and how they are fit to the everyday experience (Hubbard 1992), making it inseparable from achieving harmony with society (Yumiyama 1995).

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Chapter 10
Workers in the Vineyard: Catholic Women and Social Action

Cathy Holtmann

Women have played an active role throughout the history of Christianity, yet the historical accounts of the religious commitment of Christian women were relatively marginalized until modern feminist scholarship brought them back into the light of day. We know now that women were influential and active throughout the history of Christianity, and for the purposes of this chapter, throughout the history of the Catholic Church (Fiorenza 1992; Jensen 1996; Malone 2000; Ruether 2002).

This chapter is based on research I conducted with almost 100 Catholic women in New Brunswick, Canada over three years. I wanted to explore the ways in which Catholic women's experiences of lived religion incorporated social action – an oft over-looked component of religiosity. The women who took part in my research spoke of being involved in a variety of organizations, secular and sacred, in order to provide direct service to the marginalized and to work for social change. For most of these women, engaging in social action was an integral part of their lived religion as Catholics. This chapter outlines the different forms of Catholic women's lived religiosity in relationship to social action and the contradictions that arose between Catholic social teachings and the women's engaged spirituality.

To begin, I would like to establish what I mean when I refer to social action and how I understand the difference between religion and spirituality from a Catholic feminist perspective. Social action is a significant part of Catholicism and consists of two components. First, social action is about providing direct help to those in need or works of charity. Second, social action is about working for social change. This means coming to an understanding of the structural reasons for social inequality and working to change unjust structures whether they be economic, political or religious. A modern Catholic approach to social action involves both the components of charity and social change.

Religion and spirituality are interconnected rather than opposed to each other. To use a musical analogy, religion is like the notes that a musician uses to play a piece

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of music and spirituality is like the performance. Without the performance, music remains just markings on paper but in performance, the music comes alive and is able to give meaning and beauty to our lives. In this sense, Catholic religion and spirituality are interdependent. A key component to understanding Catholic religiosity or spirituality is agency – how are Catholics able to interpret and make music out of the notes provided by their religious tradition?

Religion helps to establish personal identity and contributes to the social order (Van Pelt Campbell 2007). Nancy Ammerman theorizes that coherence in religious identity for all individuals is continually constructed in relationships of social solidarity (2003). Therefore, religious identity is constructed on both individual and social levels. Women for whom religious identity is important feel more or less comfortable with that identity depending on the extent to which they feel they can exercise religious agency in its construction. Catholic women experience their religious agency in a variety of ways. Different forms of spirituality are more or less important to a woman depending on what she herself considers her religious goals and depending on what the community of which she is a part sets as religious goals/ideals for individuals and for the collective as a whole. Particularly in patriarchal religious contexts, it is important to understand how women's religious agency is embedded within religious structures that outsiders may consider oppressive (Mahmood 2001; Korteweg 2008). For example, Gallagher (2003) and Griffith (1997) have shown how conservative American evangelical Protestant women exercise religious agency in ensuring stability in their families within restricted spheres of social and religious life. Kaufman's research (1991) describes how contemporary, well-educated and affluent women choose ultra-orthodox forms of Judaism because it provides well-defined social roles for them in defiance of a secular world in which they feel identity confusion. Korteweg (2008), Mahmood (2001) and Hoodfar's (2006) studies of Muslim women highlight religious agency in considering issues of divorce, in the exercise of humility in relationships and in choosing whether or not to veil. Orsi's studies of Catholic practice among minority ethnic communities (1996; 2002) also illustrate how women use the traditional symbols and rituals of their faith in socially powerful ways. This sociological research into women's religiosity illustrates the claim of Dorothy Smith (2005: 27–45) that the conflicts between patriarchal religious legitimations of male dominance and feminist ideals of gender equality may make religious women's everyday and every night lives problematic but do not deny them agency (cf. Neitz 2003). It is by focusing on women's lived experience of religion in the particular contexts of their lives that we discover how they grapple with and exercise religious agency.

Contemporary qualitative studies of lived religion look beyond the religious boundaries defined by institutional officials and quantitative social scientists to the actual day-to-day experiences of people who consider themselves religious. This research picks up on forms of religiosity ignored by institutional or national surveys and can be helpful when considering social action as an aspect of religiosity. For example, Ammerman's research on "Golden Rule Christians" shows that although they value both the scriptural foundations of Christian teachings and belief in a transcendent God, they put more emphasis on their actions as good people in the everyday world.

> Most important to Golden Rule Christians is care for relationships, doing good deeds, and looking for opportunities to provide care and comfort for people in need. Their goal is neither changing another's beliefs nor changing the whole political system. They would like the world to be a bit better for their having inhabited it, but they harbor no dreams of grand revolutions (1997: 203).

Ammerman contends that through good works, the religiosity of modern Christians is probably more pervasive than has previously been recognized.

In her book *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life*, Meredith McGuire takes a historical look at the construction of boundaries between the sacred and profane that took place during what she refers to as the Long Reformation (2008: 22). The distinctions between what is presently considered properly religious and what is not are social constructions, the results of human struggles over cultural resources and power. The boundaries that have been used to determine levels of religiosity have been contested over time, and she asks sociologists to reconsider the sacred/secular dichotomy by focusing on the everyday practices of people and the meanings that people themselves give to those practices. Just as research into women and religion has shown that modern women choose to manage the multiple identities offered by their involvement in both church and society, research exploring lived religion, according to McGuire, reveals individual religious identities are also constructed. Rather than fixed, they are fluid and changing in order to adapt and respond to life's circumstances. In his work on lived religion, Orsi (1997) asserts that religion has never been a fixed dimension of a person's being but is rather a continual response to particular circumstances. Likewise, religious institutions themselves are not immutable. Religious institutions and religious individuals are mutually transformed in the exchanges between the two within the greater context of society, which is itself always undergoing transformation. Studies of Catholics in the United States illustrate how they too are continually exercising interpretive authority and negotiating the religious meanings accessible to them (Dillon 1999; D'Antonio and Pogorelc 2007; Baggett 2009).

Max Weber (1993[1922]) made the distinction between mass and virtuoso religion. The masses look to religion for comfort, healing and protection, while religious virtuosi seek to embrace fully the intellectual, emotional and ethical demands of religion. Religious virtuosity can manifest itself in a variety of ways and traditionally within Catholicism it has taken the form of life within vowed religious communities or ordained leadership in the church (Wittberg 2006). Patricia Wittberg's research (1994) has documented the rise and fall of Catholic religious orders, and Helen Rose Ebaugh (1993) contends that the decline of religious life for Catholic women is a necessary outcome of both religious and secular changes brought about by the feminist movement. The decline of traditional religious communities of women signifies a transformation of Catholic women's religiosity (Casanova 2007). The decline in the number of men choosing to pursue priestly life along with the ongoing debate about admission of women to ordained leadership are also indications of a transformation of Catholic spirituality.

Today, religious virtuosity or the means by which religious virtuosity can be practiced, have become widely available (Freston 2007). Catholic spirituality has

become increasingly democratized. My research shows that the religious agency of female Catholic virtuosi takes three basic forms, each of which can be interconnected. First, there are some for whom religious agency means developing the depth of connection with the transcendent or the divine. Through prayer, ritual participation, self-discipline, bodily awareness, connection with nature and overall well-being women experience religious connection. Agency is exercised in terms of cultivating a personal relationship with the divine. The limits to this form of religiosity are boundless and therefore agency, in this sense, is also unlimited. If limits are perceived, these limitations are personal ones. Catholic women seek to develop their spirituality through continual religious practice.

This is where Robert Orsi's assertion that religion does not necessarily need to be moral or ethical applies (2005). In terms of religiosity, Catholics can exercise agency in a personal relationship with God. They can appeal to God for comfort and aid or to the saints to intercede in their personal lives. Not only do they feel as mortals they have the power to persuade, cajole or convince God or the saints to get involved in earthly life, they also believe that the transcendent is actively present and has the power to use them for a divine purpose. Catholics understand this dynamic interaction between sacred and profane powers to take place not only when life is going well, but also in life's challenges. Orsi's work points out the romanticism of pain and suffering in the history of Catholic religious practice. Catholics believe that God is especially present among those who suffer. Today this is referred to as God's "preferential option for the poor." In the past, the sick and disabled embodied a holiness that served as a form of grace for the rest of the Catholic community. Suffering and pain were not only glorified by Catholics as a sign of God's grace and occasions for the practice of religiosity by the masses, they have also been justified and perpetuated by those who are not actually suffering. Hence, we can understand the long history of Catholic institutional involvement in attempts to control this form of personal religious virtuosity in order to correct its excesses and keep it in perspective.

A second form of Catholic spirituality entails a high degree of engagement with the institution. This can mean participation in a variety of communal activities such as liturgy, study, faith-based social action, service to the church or religious community, decision-making, and ordained and non-ordained ministries. The spirit-filled community or the whole "People of God" is primarily the locus of the sacred, and full participation in this community involves myriad experiences of sacred connection (Flannery 1988). The reforms of the second Vatican Council increased opportunities for Catholic laity and for women in particular to exercise their religious agency in this regard (Wallace 1992; Ecklund 2006; Ternier-Gommers 2007).

Third, there are some for whom religious agency means involvement in the secular community. The boundaries between the sacred and the profane are not distinct for these Catholic women (Ketchell 2002; Lichterman 2007; McGuire 2008). The entire world and all of life's activities, no matter how mundane or ordinary, are the locus of the sacred. Situations of injustice or inequality in particular call forth a social action response from those with religious identities (Stahl 2007). Calls for social action have a secure place at the heart of the modern Catholic Church. Since 1891 and the publication of the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*

(on the "Condition of Labor"), popes and national bishops conferences have written important documents outlining the Catholic church's teachings on critical social issues. The documents of the Second Vatican Council encouraged all Catholics to read the signs of the times, emphasizing a relationship between the church and the world: "the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well" (Flannery 1988: 903). The 1971 worldwide Synod of Catholic Bishops published *Justicia in Mundo* (Justice in the World) declaring social action a "constitutive dimension" of the preaching of the gospel for all Catholics (Gunn and Lambton 1999). The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) have produced statements on a variety of social issues of concern to Canadians including hunger, families, women, housing, poverty, labor, unemployment, consumerism and inequality. They wrote *A Society to be Transformed*, critiquing widespread materialism, calling it an "economic religion that inhibits the development of an ethic of sharing" (Sheridan 1987: 330) and urged Canadian Catholics to become more involved in transforming the country's economic and social structures. Being a responsible citizen, involved in one's community, working as a school teacher in the public education system, or exercising one's abilities as a nurse in providing health care are a few examples of the ways that women carry out this form of religious agency. While the activities themselves are properly secular, the women relate to them through their religious identities as Catholics.

No single form of Catholic women's religious agency is necessarily exclusive or isolated from the other forms, but religious agency does not have to include all of these forms. One form of agency can be enough for a woman to feel like she is acting religiously. It depends on the ideals of religiosity that are upheld by the community (or communities) of which she is a part. Religious people are continually practicing their agency so that it becomes an integral part of their lives and consciousness, and they usually do so within a community of other people exercising similar forms of religious agency (Dillon 1999; D'Antonio and Pogorelc 2007; Baggett 2009). Understandings and practices of religious agency are also not static or fixed – they can change through the life course (Dillon and Wink 2007).

From 2005 to 2008, I conducted qualitative interviews and focus groups with a total of 86 Catholic women from New Brunswick, a province on the east coast of Canada. Initially I interviewed eight founding members of the local chapter of the Catholic Network for Women's Equality (CNWE), a feminist movement in Canada founded in 1980. As a result of that study I discovered two crucial things: First, all of the women interviewed had some form of theological education beyond catechism. These were well-informed and engaged *virtuosi* Catholics. However, while their theological education had deepened their understanding and practice of their faith, it often resulted in decreased involvement in institutional Catholic activities, particularly in parish life. The more empowered they became through knowledge and faith, the more disempowered and alienated they felt because of institutional barriers. The second finding was that nearly all of the women, before joining CNWE, had experience with movements for social justice and had developed both the analytical skills necessary to identify injustice and the organizational skills necessary to take

action for change. It was only a matter of time before these women came to apply the knowledge and skills they had acquired in social movements to the problem of their religious agency as women in the Catholic Church (Holtmann 2008a). One woman spoke of how she came to act on her awareness of the inequality of women in the church:

> I was always aware. But I ignored it. I kind of deep-sixed it for a long, long time, because I needed that safe place. I needed what I went to church for, like why I joined the Catholic Church. I needed that for a long, long time. Every now and then I would say, "Holy shit, you chose this?" You know, like around . . . But then I would just let it go. Kind of, you know? I fought the battles at work, made sure that certain values in the Catholic Church, that I really considered wrong, were not within my own family context. But really wasn't ready to challenge it, because I needed that nurturing. I needed a safe place to go and I didn't want to mix it up. So what started stirring it? Probably about 10 years ago it got more and more difficult to do that. With issues of ordination, with AIDS in Africa is probably a big thing for me. Another huge thing for me was becoming more familiar with the history of residential schools and the role that all churches, and the Catholic Church played in that.[1] And just trying to understand that. As I became more involved in social justice issues, a growing understanding that none of the issues are separate. That there's something kind of basically inherent in the hierarchical church that caused all of those things to happen, not just the women's issue. I couldn't separate anymore. I couldn't separate the aboriginal; couldn't separate the AIDS in Africa kind of stuff; couldn't separate the women that I knew were single and were really struggling with issues of divorce, like friends of mine and how they felt when the went to church. The whole thing was inclusion in its broadest sense. (CNWE Woman #2)

The women in this study chose to join a movement for Catholic religious reform in order to support one another collectively and to receive support from other Catholics in exercising all forms of their religious agency. They used their experiences of religious agency in the realm of social action to critique and work for change in terms of women's opportunities for religious agency within the institution.

The next study I conducted involved members of four different women's religious communities. I interviewed 16 nuns (Holtmann 2008b) and found that they too had advanced theological education along with a high degree of feminist consciousness, although many were hesitant to label themselves as feminists. Most of the nuns had taken part in work for social change including establishing and administering health care institutions, advocating for persons with HIV/AIDS, ensuring minority language rights in the public school system, and heightening awareness of environmental issues, to name but a few. Many of them had worked in various forms of ministry within the Catholic Church. All of them had experienced alienation within the Catholic institution. Two elements of their life stories helped them to deal with their experiences of religious alienation. First, they were "mistresses of

[1] In the nineteenth century the Canadian government used church-run residential schools to assimilate aboriginal children into society. The government provided the facilities and resources, and churches provided the teachers and staff. Sixty percent of the schools were run by the Catholic Church. Details of the mistreatment of students surfaced, and the schools were closed by the 1960s. Today, knowledge of widespread physical and sexual abuse, overcrowding, poor sanitation and lack of medical care for the students have resulted in allegations of cultural genocide by First Nations people in Canada.

change," and second, they had a remarkable ability to build bridges. The financial stability that collective life offered them along with the community's relative autonomy within the larger institution of the Catholic Church were assets that individual nuns drew upon continually. As women religious they were insiders in Catholicism and had a long tradition of exercising all three forms of religious virtuosity. However, when that agency was thwarted in one way or another they were able to find new avenues for action. Advanced education and professional development were lifelong experiences that helped them to adapt. They did not solely rely on either the Catholic Church or secular institutions for employment but often moved between the two. The nuns were able to change jobs, retrain or remain temporarily unemployed when the situation warranted it. They understood change as part of the historical traditions of their religious communities. They also mentioned the influence of their family background, the support of their fellow sisters and their faith in God during the hard times:

> It's been very challenging and so it's always a new challenge. But my whole way of being, probably because it's part of my family too, you do what you can while you can. Nobody has it all. We all have some gifts and limitations. . . This is where the Lord is calling me. I have what I need. I don't have what somebody else has, I have what I need. (Order #1, Woman #1)

The nuns were able to overcome the dualisms of public/private, sacred/secular and clergy/laity that confronted them. They believed that change was always possible and that it could occur through faith, ongoing communal reflection and dialogue, and action. They were well aware of the uncertainty of the future of religious life, but they found sources of hope. Many of them spoke of how they were strengthened by hardship and fear. All of them were grateful for their lives. At the end of one particular interview, a sister said to me, "I hope you see that I'm happy."

These two studies illustrated that both of these groups of virtuosi experienced alienation within the Catholic Church and both of these groups of women worked to create alternative opportunities for support and religious identity formation somewhat on the margins of the institution (Dillon 1999; Lichterman 2007). Both of these groups of women also had high involvement in social action, particularly in the work of social change, as a component of their religiosity. In fact, they saw their personal careers, religious communities and the local CNWE chapter as part of a larger, global movement for social change. Work for religious change and secular change was not separated – it was intimately connected, and the women were engaged in this work.

Then I conducted a study with the intent of listening to the experiences of Catholic women in the institutional mainstream – women in (and out) of the pews engaged in a variety of forms of religious agency. Through focus groups and personal interviews in five different Catholic parishes selected for their regional and socioeconomic diversity, I listened to over 60 women speak about their experiences of lived religion with a particular focus on social action as a form of Catholic religiosity (Holtmann 2009). Aside from seven women who self-identified as "lapsed Catholics" and had ceased their involvement in a local parish, the women were engaged in all three forms of religious agency to varying degrees. Many of the women prayed regularly and spoke about how nature was a key source of spiritual

connection for them. For some, reading spiritual literature, doing yoga or attending retreats was important. Those associated with parishes spoke of attending mass regularly, taking part in liturgical ministries such as lectors, sacristans and communion ministers, participating in bible study groups, volunteering to teach catechism, singing in the choir and serving on parish council.

The primary form of social action for most of the women in this study was working to aid the less fortunate in their communities and abroad, or charity. There were many stories of organizing church suppers, food drives for the local food bank, parish fundraisers to aid missions in the developing world, and delivering care packages to local women's shelters. Women were involved in their local communities through service organizations and fundraising efforts for cancer, heart and kidney disease. At their workplaces women collected money for Alzheimer's research from their coworkers or helped to fill boxes with used clothing for the homeless. Only a few of the women had made the commitment of time and energy as members of such social movements as the Catholic Women's League of Canada or the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, which focus on the work of social change at the national and international levels. At the time of the study, only one church was becoming more intentionally involved in the work of social transformation at the local level. A woman who served on the parish council at this church spoke about their efforts to connect with a low-income community tenants' association and the community resource center:

> I'm a member and that is one of the focuses of that [parish] council is to get ourselves involved more in the spirituality of our parish and our connection with our community and what we can do within our community. . . You know, so we're trying now to make more connections with each other and support each other's projects. And inform each other, like through our church bulletin, inform our church what's going on with the projects and vice versa. And in that way we hope not only to help them and support them, but maybe to open the doors for people who might be part of our religious community as well. (Parish Focus Group #6, Woman #3)

Some women at this church were involved in the tenants' association as well as a community organization that lobbied municipal government for funding to improve poor neighbourhoods.

Two churches in the study had histories of involvement on local issues of social justice such as the unionization of factory workers or urban poverty and homelessness, but that had changed when new priests came into leadership. This change in pastoral direction, which tended to exclude or ignore any form of collective education and action on social justice, was a source of division within these churches. The women told many stories about conflicts with particular priests or between people in their parishes. Unresolved conflicts often resulted in women decreasing their participation in communal forms of Catholic religiosity, such as attendance at mass or work for social action, but not in personal religious practices.

From this study of mainstream Catholic women, I found that there was a thread of discontentment running through their narratives. The primary reasons that the "lapsed" Catholic women had stopped participating in collective religious practices were because they disliked the condemning tone of church leaders, and they

disagreed with Catholic teachings on such things as divorce, women, and homosexuality. Yet there was a longing among them for a deeper sense of community. In a focus group two women discussed whether or not they would return to church if the teachings changed:

> Woman #3: It sounds like the church has to adapt. So like that, keep that community but maybe change the message, I don't know, make it a little bit . . . maybe that's why people are drifting away because it's not, people aren't enjoying the message anymore.
>
> Woman #1: It would be interesting to see . . . I actually have thought about this quite a bit, not just because of this [focus group]. It would be interesting to see though, because we always talk about if only the church had evolved somewhat. But I wonder if all of us had that same vision of if the church evolved then we would go back, would it be the same? Or is it that, like [she] said, that we want to just like pick and choose? Because some people, stem cell research is like the one, hold-out thing that they want, but there are some people who, it's just same-sex marriage and if there's no stem-cells then they understand it – that kind of thing. Have all Catholic's beliefs kind of evolved the same way away [from] what we're fighting against? Or is that we all have this vision of what we want the church to be . . . ? (Lapsed Focus Group #1)

The question of what disengaged, self-identified Catholics want from the institution remains to be answered. Yet even the women who were active in their local parishes were worried that despite rearing them in the faith, so few of their children were engaged Catholics other than on the personal spiritual level.

The women involved in their local churches felt they could exercise agency at the personal and communal levels, but expressed dissatisfaction with the status quo at the level of social action. They did not feel the degree of support they needed from their religious leaders or the necessary openness from their fellow Catholics. One woman said that the Catholic Church seemed to be "going backwards," to an atmosphere of authoritarianism that lacked a sense of community and a concrete commitment to helping people. Many of the women were able to identify unfulfilled needs in their communities such as outreach to the elderly, lonely, families, youth and the poor. They felt that the people in their churches had the skills and resources necessary to address these needs, but the will of the leadership was not there, hence the religious agency of the laity was being curbed. They wanted their churches to be more relevant and involved in the day-to-day lives of people and the communities in which they lived. Stories of conflict with priests and with other parishioners added to their frustration. This is reminiscent of the analysis of American Christian women's widespread experiences of the alienation portrayed in *Defecting In Place: Women Claiming Responsibility for Their Own Spiritual Lives* (Winter et al. 1995). That study showed that Christian women were turning increasingly to small groups in order to affirm and strengthen their religious identity and agency – something that they were not getting enough of from church institutions.

There is a real danger that the contradiction between women's involvement in social action and the barriers to their agency within the institution is contributing to what Jerome Baggett (2009) refers to as civic underachieving and civic silencing among Catholics. My research concurs with the finding in Baggett's study of Catholics in California that churches are better at steering people toward charitable endeavors rather than undertaking long-term projects of social change.

Charity is not only easier in that it provides relatively quick gratification for those involved and concrete, demonstrable results, it is also less complicated in terms of congregational dynamics and Catholic politics. Open discussions of Catholic social teachings and societal problems will inevitably raise differences of opinion among Catholics and could lead to tension and conflict. There is ample evidence that Catholic churches, in New Brunswick at least, are not places where conflict is being dealt with in a constructive way.

Currently the discussion on women's religious agency within the institutional church is stuck at an impasse. Women with heightened skills for social analysis, coupled with theological education, understand that power within the Catholic Church is unjustly distributed. They cannot use their agency and resources for change within the church without the approval or support of the all male clergy. It stands to reason therefore, that their sense of religious agency within the institution is curbed. As a result women's full religious agency becomes a matter of social justice. For virtuosi Catholic women, this means maintaining a bifurcated consciousness or what Dillon refers to as an achieved religious identity (1999). It is fundamentally problematic for Catholic women to engage collectively the work for social justice when the institution remains a place of structural injustice. While continuing to identify as Catholic and participating in local churches when possible, they also take part in small groups or parachurch groups in order to support their Catholic identity and practice forms of non-sexist religious democratic participation. They work to create spaces within Catholicism where their feminist religious identities are affirmed and their social justice work can flourish and be celebrated (Ecklund 2005).

From this research into the lived religion of Catholic women in New Brunswick, I have formulated the following conclusions:

1. Religious virtuosity is indeed democratized among Catholic women and it is threefold: it involves elements of personal spirituality, institutional participation and social action. The boundaries between contemporary vowed women religious and lay women in terms of their religiosity and agency have all but disappeared.
2. Mainstream Catholic women engage in personal spiritual formation and institutional participation. If they engage in social action it is primarily through works of charity.
3. All Catholic women in the study experienced some degree of alienation within the institution. Conflict between women and priests, and between these women and other parishioners, seems to preclude long-term work for social change by local churches.
4. Catholic women who are highly engaged in work for social change create or turn to small groups in order to deal with their experiences of alienation and to exercise greater religious agency.
5. Engagement in work for social change by Catholic women inevitably raises the question of the roles of women (and laity) in the institutional church. Critical social analysis, which is required by the work for social justice, is by nature reflective of social structures and power dynamics.

6. An engaged spirituality for Catholic women that includes personal spiritual growth, institutional participation and social action necessarily means a spirituality that is critical of the unjust structures of the contemporary Catholic church. Putting Catholic social teachings into practice becomes problematic for women and for the institutional church because doing so exposes a fundamental contradiction between the church's social teachings and its practice.

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Chapter 11
"Short Youth": Resources and Meanings of Early Transition to Adulthood Among Immigrant Youths

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Sociological debate on the life course (Ongaro 1995, 2001, 2006; Cavalli and Galland 1996; Cavalli and Facchini 2001; Cavalli 2005; Iori 1999; Pisati 2002; Saraceno 2001; Sgritta 2002; Facchini and Villa 2005) testifies to the difficulties of using concepts with contours that are increasingly more changeable and blurred: "youth," "adulthood" and "transition" are still used as compasses to guide analyses. The latter, nevertheless, often repudiates the initial implications and hypotheses. This is certainly true for Italian youths and for the resources of composing and recomposing the personal experiences activated by them. *Recomposition* consists of a "person's ability to define his or her own identity, not only in existential terms (Who am I?), but also in proactive terms. This means that an individually recomposed person is one who knows how to bring the choices and paths of his or her biography back to the unitary and propulsive center that is his or her own biography" (Cesareo 2005: 16). Recomposition is defined in relation to the constitutive dimension of the second modernity, *fragmentation* (Giddens 1994; Bauman 1999, 2000, 2002; Beck 1999, 2000). People recompose their material and symbolic experience as part of globalization processes that have greatly redesigned the arena of biographical constructions, which are increasingly less linear and less foregone conclusions (Melucci 1994; Melucci and Fabbrini 2004).

As a result, empirical studies conducted on Italian youths (Buzzi, Cavalli, and de Lillo 2007) do not attest to the *tout court* disappearance of institutional socializing references that have traditionally marked the paths of transition to adulthood, but rather, to the redefinition of the meanings attributed to these references. Therefore, the family (both the family of origin and the elected family), although taking on the characteristics of an option, is still an important reference for Italian youths. Of course, the exit paths from the family of origin change, and the times for creating

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one's own family or own form of cohabitation change, as do the meanings attributed to this family:

> What we … really want to highlight is that, even in Italy, a plurality of models are beginning to emerge for constituting new families and stringing together crucial events…. Leaving the family of origin, marriage, cohabitation, conception of children. The "traditional" model, which continues, however, to be the most common and characterized by a simultaneousness of the passages, is joined by another two models where these passages are empowered and basically become distant from each other. In the first model, cohabitation is seen as a transitory phase that leads to marriage, especially in the presence of procreative projects. In the second model, cohabitation emerges as a stable model of the couple, which continues even in the presence of children (Facchini 2007: 128).

These last considerations are also valid for the spheres of significance, *in primis*, the religious sphere. Religious references are also subject to trajectories of use and reuse that in various ways intercept the institutional religious dimensions and mold them in original terms. The passing of one's personal life sees a continuation in this reconstruction of relationships with the dimension of the sacred and a change in the role conceded to this in individual experience.

These brief considerations introduce the theme of the present analysis: the transition to adulthood among young Moroccan and Romanian immigrants in Italy. Particular attention will be paid to the self-representations of these latter immigrants in relation to the role perceived for the religious dimension in everyday life, the interconnections of the ethical dimension with the moral dimension and with other spheres of experience. The research question implied by the analysis returns to a question that forms the basis of most recent surveys on Italians youths: what strategies do young people implement during the transition to adulthood to give sense to their experience? How are the representations influenced by the different structures of opportunity?

The initial hypothesis of the survey can be summed up in this way: the transition to adulthood of young migrants occurs earlier in life compared to Italian youths. Young people use it to implement the material and symbolic resources acquired during the previous life courses (such as school life) and through these, create spaces for the progressive acquisition of independence.

Both the research question and the initial hypothesis start from an observation for which, over the years, research projects focusing on the experiences of young people and adolescents of foreign origin have multiplied. However, an analytical survey concentrating on young foreign adults still has not been developed. This is a segment of the Italian population in rapid growth and completely interactive with the network of significances that forms Italian society as a whole.

The research reported here was conducted in the summer-autumn of 2009 in Veneto by means of 293 structured questionnaires divided in this way: 150 questionnaires to Romanian youths between the ages of 18 and 29 (among whom, from among those who indicated belonging to a religion, 90% declared to be Orthodox Christians and 10% Catholics); 143 questionnaires to Moroccan youths between the same ages (all of whom, among those who indicated belonging to a religion, declared themselves Muslim). The sample quotas by gender and age

were respected for both the Romanians and the Moroccans: the interviews were distributed by dividing them into almost equal groups of men and women and, secondly, in the same proportions, into groups of people aged between 18 and 24 and between 25 and 29.[1]

Outcomes

The responses analyzed in this chapter refer to two queries and to two batteries of questions: the first two concern, respectively, the interviewee's perception of the role of religion in everyday life and his or her self-definition as a practicing or non-practicing believer. The two following batteries aimed at exploring the order of priorities attributed by the interviewees to the different dimensions that form their everyday experience and, in second place, the attitudes toward some types of moral behaviors.

The presentation of the results will begin with an analysis of the first two questions.

The Romanian and Moroccan youths were asked the following question: "*At present, how important is religion in your life?*" (Table 11.1).

The answers indicate the clear prevalence of Moroccan youth in defining religion as "somewhat or very important" in their life. These two modalities of response accumulated together represent over 92% of the responses, compared to a much lower level for Romanian youth (although, still very high) of 69.8%. Both distributions of frequency present a concentration toward the area that identifies religion as a very important factor. In this regard, it is necessary to remember that it deals with a self-assessment of the interviewee and therefore, should not be regarded as confirmation of the actual practices (Table 11.2).

Actual religious practice, in this sense, was surveyed as self-reconstruction. The answers outline a partially different picture from the previous question. While the distribution of frequency relating to Moroccan youths remains strongly polarized,

Table 11.1 At present, how important is religion in your life? (Percent, by nationality)

	Nationality	
	Moroccan ($n = 142$)	Romanian ($n = 149$)
Somewhat + very important	92.3	69.8
Not very important	7.7	30.2
Total	100.0	100.0

[1] Before going into details of the results, it is appropriate to specify that the results discussed later in this study are the product of an analysis that is still in progress. Therefore, they should not be taken as being final because further considerations are still necessary. Nevertheless, they are useful for an initial impression of where some elements stand as of now.

Table 11.2 From a religious point of view, do you consider yourself …

	Nationality	
	Moroccan ($n=142$)	Romanian ($n=149$)
Atheist	0.7	3.4
Not interested/Agnostic	2.1	6.0
I believe in God, but am not religious	2.1	1.3
Non-practicing believer	19.7	37.6
Practicing believer	75.4	51.7
Total	100.0	100.0

that of the Romanian youths appears more balanced. The deviation as regards the "very + somewhat important" modality referring to religion's centrality in everyday life prevalent in Romanian youths (who define themselves as practicing believers in 51.7% of the cases), is significant, but to a lesser extent than among their Moroccan peers (75.4% of whom considered themselves to be practicing believers). The values of those who define themselves as being "believers, but not religious" (2.1% Moroccans, 1.3% Romanians), "not interested/agnostic" (2.1% Moroccans, 6% Romanians) and "atheists" (0.7% Moroccans, 3.4% Romanians) are small for both nationalities surveyed.

Except for differences in the methodology, it is worth noting how the empirical findings for young Italians (including the cohort examined in this research) indicate the following:

> The pressure toward transcendence touches a wide number of people and, probably, the question on the existence of God is an interrogative still faced by every young person. . . . If the interest toward the world of the sacred does not appear to be cancelled, then it is also true that active participation in a religion appears to be in great crisis …. Is religious belief still able to influence moral choices? … This is true especially for those who demonstrate a stronger religious identity, but the secularization process underway seems to delimit the area of influence of religion within this scope. In fact, even among young believers and practicing believers the prevailing principle appears to be "when the will of others is not harmed, individual choices must not bow to other regulations that do not know free will" (Grassi 2007: 171–72).

The comparison of the results reported to our interviewees with these assessments on Italian youths must take into consideration the fact that in a country of immigration the religious dimension can take on a very special importance in individual biographies. In other words, even people who were previously less attentive to religion can re-invent it as a *source of guiding sense* in a potentially and variably anomic social system. Further analyses were conducted to understand if, in view of this, it is possible to talk of a strong sense of belonging or, on the contrary, a weak sense of belonging.

First, in order to summarize adequately the information contained in the answers of the first two questions and make them fit to be used for the bivariate analysis, a typology was created that reconciles the dimension of "perceived religious centrality" with that of represented observance/non-observance without losing the wealth of

Table 11.3 Religious typology by nationality

	Nationality	
	Moroccan ($n=135$)	Romanian ($n=133$)
Believers	79.2	51.1
Spirituals	17.8	27.1
Ritualists	0	6.8
Uninterested	3.0	15.0
Total	100.0	100.0

information.[2] The typology that originates by crossing the two dimensions was initially divided into four modalities:

- *Practicing Believers*: these are people who define the religious dimension to be "somewhat or very important" and, at the same time, define themselves as being practicing believers or church-goers.
- *Spirituals:* people who, although they regard the religious dimension to be somewhat or very important, consider themselves to be non-practicing believers;
- *Ritualists*: people who attribute an underlying marginality to religion (considering it to be not very or not at all important), but who nevertheless define themselves as being practicing believers;
- *Uninterested*: people who consider the religious dimension to be marginal (not at all or not very important) and refer to themselves as non-practicing believers (Table 11.3).

The distribution of the typology brings back the net difference between Moroccan youths and Romanian youths. In order to increase the size of respondents in view of the bivariate analysis, the typology constructed in this way was once again re-aggregated. The interviewees were separated into *believers*, *spirituals*, and by re-aggregating *ritualists* and *uninterested, "tepid"* youths. Since the number of Moroccan youths belonging to this last type is almost nothing, comments on them will refer only to the two main types (*believers* and *spirituals*).

Covariances Between the Socio-Demographic Variables and the Religious Typology

What are the influences of the socio-demographic variables on the interviewee's belonging to the proposed types? To answer this question, the various results collected with the survey instrument were taken into consideration as well as the following properties: gender, education, age, and year of arrival in Italy.

Observing the variations by gender, *believers* prevail among Romanian men by over 20% (63.3% compared to 41.1% of women); instead, there are more *spiritual*

[2] Atheists, uninterested/agnostics and believers who do not identify themselves with any religion were excluded from the construction of the typology.

and *tepid women* (respectively, in 31.5% and 27.4% of the cases compared to 21.7% and 15% of men). This trend is also seen in Moroccan youths, but with much less consistent deviations: there were more *believers* among Moroccan men (82.4%) compared to Moroccan women (76.1%). These latter, just like their Romanian counterparts, are situated with greater consistency (compared to men) in correspondence to the *spiritual* type. More generally, those who perceive themselves as being *practicing believers* and who place a lot of importance on religion are mainly men, following more linear paths than the women interviewed. These last considerations are also valid when examining the shifts regarding the level of education. The hypothesis that a different cultural capital corresponds to a diversified attitude toward religion finds confirmation in these results: *believers* are more numerous (58%) among Romanians with a low or medium education qualification (up to a professional diploma) compared to those with a medium to high education qualification (43.8%) (up to a university degree). The latter are mainly positioned among *spiritual* and *tepid* youths (with 31.3% and 25% of the cases compared to 23.2% and 18.8% for those with a low education qualification). Moroccan youths once again repeat the form of combined distribution of the Romanians, not the force: *believers* are more predominant among those with a low education qualification, while a clear majority of *believers* remains among those with a high education qualification, but the number of *spirituals* increases. Nevertheless, the differences in favor of one or another type do not exceed 6% points. The profile of *believers*, then, mainly deviates toward males and interviewees with low cultural capital, with more significant differences among Romanian youths compared to Moroccan youths.

Before crossing the proposed typology with the age of the interviewees, we must first take into consideration the different migrant seniority of the two national groups. Immigration of Romanians to Italy occurs chronologically later than that of Moroccans, as verified by the two samples considered in the survey: the Romanian youths interviewed who came to Italy prior to 2003 amounted to 40% of the total, while the remainder came between 2004 and 2009 (average year of arrival: 2004). The proportion is inverted among Moroccan youths (average year of arrival: 1999).

If we cross the date of arrival in Italy with the division in two sub-cohorts of the total cohort considered in the survey (18–29 years), an even distribution of the two macro-intervals of age emerges among those who arrived before and those who arrived later, without significant differences between Moroccan youths and Romanian youths. If it is assumed that a longer migration course corresponds to a change in the religious behavior in the country of immigration, then it can be observed that for Romanians both age and year of arrival do not produce effects worth noting on the diverse distribution of the interviewees in respect to the methods of the typology (since most of them arrived in Italy after 2003, both young and old); for Moroccans, however, age does not produce effects comparable to those produced instead by the year of arrival (because both younger and older immigrants present more consistent migration seniority compared to Romanians of the same age). For Romanian youths, the crossing of the typology with the year of arrival does not bring about important variations and almost reproduces the first group's distribution of simple frequency; even the range of sub-cohorts taken into consideration is low. For Moroccan youths

the crossing of the typology with the age produces two almost slavish distributions in respect to this typology's distribution of simple frequency; this is not so for the year of arrival in Italy (with however, modest variations). The weight of *believers* (84.3%) among Moroccan youths who arrived in Italy between 2004 and 2009 exceeds the weight of the corresponding modality among Moroccan youths who arrived in Italy before 2003 (76.8%) by eight percentage points; in parallel, the second group has a higher percentage of *spirituals* (19.5% compared to 13.7% for those who arrived more recently). In this last trend, it is difficult to find corroboration with the fact that, among the Moroccan youths interviewed, there is a relationship between the seniority of the migration path to Italy and a change in the self-perception of oneself as more or less religious. Further on, we will also see how a "socializing" path in Italy produces interesting variations with reference to one's personal moral sphere.

The relationships between this and the ethical dimension will be discussed later on, but here we can summarize the characteristics of the religious types proposed so far:

Believers are predominately more *men* than *women*, among both the Moroccan and Romanian youths interviewed; a higher number of youths with a *low education qualification*; for Moroccan youths, more youths who have been in Italy for a short period of time.

Spirituals consist of more *women* and *more educated* people. Only for Moroccans, these are those who have been in Italy for a longer period of time.

Tepids among Romanian youths have a profile very similar to that of *spirituals*. They are characterized by gender (their weight among *women* is slightly less than *spirituals*) and by education qualification (like *spirituals,* there is a higher percentage of *more educated* youths compared to less educated youths).

The Influence of the Religious Typology on the Moral Dimension of Those Interviewed

The considerations put forward up to now have involved the self-perceptions of the interviewees in relation to the sacred dimension. From here onward, we will examine the influence that these have on the representations of lawfulness/unlawfulness of some types of behaviors. Our goal is to investigate the moral conduct of the interviewees through these influences. The exploration of the moral dimension was defined in operational terms by proposing behaviors relating to four main spheres to the Moroccan and Romanian youths: the spheres of economics, family and sexual relationships, life relationships, and health and addiction.

Focusing on the area of family and sexual relationships, the interviewees were asked if, in their opinion, the following behaviors are admissible or not: to have homosexual experiences, to have paid sexual relations, to have a relationship with a married person, to look at pornographic materials, to divorce, to live with someone without being married.

To have homosexual experiences: The Moroccan youths interviewed considered this behavior admissible in 4.4% of the cases compared to 18.9% of Romanian youths. The first group does not produce significant variations between *believers* and *spirituals*, while in the second group, the weight of those who considered this type of behavior admissible increased among *tepid* youths to 34.5%, while remaining near the average among *believers* and *spirituals*. As previously mentioned, the number of *tepid* youths among Moroccan youths is too small to make any evaluations.

To have paid sexual relations: This case does not show a very consistent average deviation among the answers given by Moroccan youths and Romanian youths (the percentage value of admissibility is equal to 11.1% for the first group and 17.4% for the second). Likewise, the positions of *believers* and *spirituals* (for both nationalities) do not manifest significant variations. Once again the position of *tepid* youths stands out among Romanians, who in 25% of the cases consider the behavior admissible.

To have a relationship with a married person: The average differential in the answers relating to this item increases to almost 20% points between Moroccans (who consider the behavior admissible in 9.7% of the cases) and Romanians (who consider it admissible in 27.8% of the cases). The position of *spiritual* and *tepid* youths (among Romanians) is worth noting: while the data of how many consider the behavior admissible is close to the average among *believers*, it drops below 14% among *spirituals* and rises to 48.3% among *tepids*. Moroccan *spirituals* consider the behavior admissible in 12.5% of the cases compared to 7.5% of *believers*.

To look at pornographic material: Half of the Romanians interviewed consider the behavior to be admissible, a fifth of Moroccans. Among the first group, the lower percentage of admissibility regards *spirituals* (41.1%), while *believers* and *tepids* stand respectively at 2% and 6% points above the average. More noteworthy is the shift among Moroccan youths: *spirituals* double the admissibility percentage of *believers* (34.8% compared to 15.8%).

Divorce: 58.6% of the Romanians interviewed consider it admissible and 34.1% of Moroccans. For Romanians, the trend of the cross-data increases in an inversely proportional measure to the perception of stringency of the religious dimension: from 48.5% of *believers,* it increases to 52.8% among *spirituals,* and almost reaches 90% among *tepids*. For the Moroccans, *spirituals* double the admissibility percentage recorded for *believers* (28% for the second group compared to 54.2% of the first group).

To live together without being married: Romanian youths and Moroccan youths follow, in this case, completely different trajectories. Three quarters of the first group consider it admissible behavior, a fifth of the second group. The trend of the frequency distributions follows the same path as that observed for divorce: for Romanian youths, the lower admissibility value is recorded among *believers* (61.8%), passing to 80.6% among *spirituals* and up to 96.6% among *tepids*. Similar to divorce, the scissors relating to the answers given by Moroccan youths remains wide open between *believers* (16.8%) and *spirituals* (37.5%).

If value is given to the role performed by the religious types (as an independent variable) on the perceptions of admissibility/inadmissibility of the behaviors analyzed, then this could result in an underlying observation: as expected, the increase in the misalignment perceived between belief and practice, notwithstanding the differences analytically observed among Romanian and Moroccan youths, goes hand in hand with the increase of the perception of lawfulness of variably conflicting behaviors.

In order to refine the analysis further, however, it is possible to replicate an operation that was already performed: to make the religious variable dependent once again and verify whether other variations of it (for each behavior examined) are possible *inside* each modality (*believer*, *spiritual*, and *tepid*) in relation to the variable of "education qualification obtained in Italy/in country of origin." This last *proxy* variable allows linking the analysis to what could previously have been overlooked: can a socializing path in Italy (of a variable duration) contribute to loosening ethical-moral references? In other words, for each religious modality taken into consideration, how do the admissibility levels of the behaviors vary in relation to the presence of a socializing path (like the scholastic one) in Italy?

For convenience, the variations that interest young Moroccan *believers* and *spirituals* will be examined for each type of behavior. The analysis will be limited to Moroccans because, unlike Romanians, there are enough people (almost half) who obtained their last school certificate in Italy to allow for a proper analysis. It should also be noted that 80% of the Moroccans taken into consideration possess a qualification that is lower than a professional diploma.

To have homosexual experiences: As previously observed, the general level of admissibility for this behavior is very low among the Moroccan youths interviewed. Both among *believers* and *spirituals*, there are no significant deviations in relation to the attainment of the last education qualification in Italy.

To have paid sexual relations: Also in this case, the level of admissibility net of the crossings with the religious variable recorded marginal levels of admissibility (around 10%). Margins of difference were not noted among *believers* or *spirituals* in relation to the country where the last education qualification was obtained.

To have a relationship with a married person: These were entirely similar to the last two items considered.

To look at pornographic material: In this item, the answers start to become more diversified because of the variable "country where the education qualification was obtained." Moroccan youths who define themselves as *believers* and who obtained their last education qualification in Italy, consider this behavior admissible in 27.3% of the cases, compared to 8.3% of those who obtained their last education qualification in their country of origin. The percentages are inverted for those who define themselves as *spirituals*: in this case, those who obtained their last education qualification in Italy have a lower percentage of admissibility than *spirituals* who obtained their last education qualification abroad (30% for the first group, 38.5% for the second).

Divorce: Once again in this case, *believers* and *spirituals* have different trajectories based on the variable considered. The percentage of admissibility of divorce among *believers* who obtained their last education qualification in their country of origin equals 20%, but rises to 40.9% among *believers* who obtained their last educational qualification in Italy. Among *spirituals*, the percentage of admissibility among those who received their last education qualification in Italy (50%) is lower than *spirituals* who received their last qualification abroad.

To live together without being married: For this item, the positions of believers and spirituals (based on the variable considered) are even more in agreement. *Believers:* the percentage of admissibility of premarital cohabitation reaches 13.3% among *believers* who obtained their last education qualification in their country of origin, increasing by almost 10% points among *believers* who obtained their last education qualification in Italy (22.7%). Also among *spirituals*, although to a lesser extent, the percentage of admissibility is higher among those who obtained their last education qualification in Italy compared to those who obtained it abroad.

To have premarital sex: Among all the items taken into consideration, this is the one that has the most correspondence between the groups (*believers* and *spirituals*) and greater differences within the groups themselves (based on the country where the education qualification was obtained). Among both *believers* and *spirituals*, the admissibility percentage of those who obtained their education qualification in Italy is much higher compared to what was manifested by those who obtained their last education qualification abroad. Among *believers* who obtained their last education qualification in Italy, the admissibility value reaches 40.9% (compared to 11.9% of *believers* who obtained their last qualification abroad); among *spirituals* who obtained their last education qualification in Italy, the admissibility percentage reaches 60%, compared to 35.7% for *spirituals* who obtained their last education qualification abroad.

Heuristic capacities cannot be attributed to the variations that have just been analyzed because the small numbers in play would make them invalid. On the other hand, the examination of the positions of *believers* among Moroccan youths (the type with the highest numbers) suggests that against an apparent unanimity of perception, the concrete paths of those interviewed can take different directions such as to modify the sense attributed to the moral sphere. Nevertheless, it deals only with indications that make room for multivariate analyses capable of entering into detail and identifying the lines of fracture, even in places where the data appear to be unidirectional.

In sum, it can be said that this analysis conducted between the religious dimension and the moral dimension indicates a significant difference between national groups and, at the same time, coherence between religious types that is transversal to the national origin. This is the same as saying that with reference to the items considered, Romanian youths, on the one hand, present an "aggregated level of admissibility" that is greater than their Moroccan peers; on the other hand, in both cases the persons declared as belonging to different religious types differentiates with respect to the answers given by the interviewees to the proposed possibilities.

Co-variations Between Religious Type and Gender Relations

Before proceeding to the conclusions, the analytical focus will examine another bivariate analysis having as an independent variable the type of belonging in terms of the typology. Finally, we will illustrate the results of a multivariate analysis (for the main components). The type proposed is recorded in (discrete) relation compared to the lawfulness/unlawfulness of some types of behavior as perceived by those interviewed. Does the same thing occur regarding gender relations?

To obtain the answers to this question, some affirmations (deliberately of common sense) were put to the interviewees in order to verify their personal family models and gender relations. Among these, two were taken into consideration:

The man is the main breadwinner of the family.
The man is in charge at home.

The Man Is the Main Breadwinner of the Family

81.8% of the Moroccan youths and 56.7% of Romanian youths interviewed agreed (somewhat + a lot) with this affirmation. If these results are compared to the religious typology, at a first glance the considerable difference between the first and second group clearly stands out: the average data for Moroccan youths do not vary between *believers* and *spirituals* (which remain constant). However, they do vary in a linear manner when passing from *believers* to *tepids* among Romanian youths. Among *believers,* 63.2% agree with this affirmation, compared to 55.6% of *spirituals* and 44.8% of *tepids*. If we compare these variations with those by gender, this last group (as expected) is much more pronounced. The concordance of opinion among Moroccan youths (observed by crossing the religious types) disappears, and the percentage differences among Romanian youths widens. 89.2% of the Moroccan men interviewed agree with this affirmation compared to 73.9% of women. Forty percentage points divide, instead, Romanian men and women: the percentage of agreement is equal to 78.9% and 36.7% respectively.

The Man Is in Charge at Home

This claim, much more definite than the previous one, shows a greater proximity of opinion between the Moroccan youths and Romanian youths interviewed. Here, 44.8% of the first group and 29.5% of the second group agree (somewhat + a lot).

Even the crossing with the religious typologies highlights less significant differences, although with similar trends in the form of the relationship. As already observed for the other affirmation examined, there are no significant differences regarding Moroccan youths, while for Romanian youths the percentage of agreement drops gradually with the passing from *believers* (32.4% of agreement) to *tepids* (25%).

The crossover by gender presents a composite picture that has similarities and differences if compared to what was outlined in the previous question. The scissors of difference widen in the responses given by Moroccan men and women (58.1% of agreement among men, 30.4% of agreement among the women), and remains very noticeable among Romanian men and women 47.9% of agreement among men and 12.8% among women. The comparison made by these last variations suggests that, in gender relations, the variations in the answers mainly relate to the religious types only for Romanian youths and not for Moroccans, who on the contrary, attest to greater constancy in the answers.

A Multivariate Analysis

Up to now, we have seen how significant differences emerge for both national groups relating to the various questions and items in our study. To identify the latent dimensions that guide the answers of the interviewees, the main components of a battery of questions were analyzed.[3] The following dimensions were included in this analysis: *family, work, friendship, politics, religion, social commitment, study and cultural interests, pastimes, sporting activities, personal success and career, social equality, solidarity, love, freedom and democracy, a comfortable and easy life, homeland, having fun and enjoying life*.

The processing of the answers given by Romanian youths led to the following results:

First component (23% of variance explained): social commitment, cultural interests and study;
Second component (10.3% of variance explained): solidarity, love, freedom and democracy;
Third component (9.9% of variance explained): sporting activities, personal success and professional career, pastimes, having fun/enjoying life.

The analysis conducted on Moroccan youths instead produced these components:

First component (23.4% of variance explained): social equality, solidarity, love, freedom and democracy;
Second component (12.3% of variance explained): pastimes, sporting activities, having fun/enjoying life;
Third component (8.9% of variance explained): success, a comfortable and easy life, and homeland.

Within the limits of this project, it was not possible to examine in an exhaustive manner the ideas provided by the components identified among Romanian and

[3]The analysis of the main components was conducted via SPSS 12.0 software using the Varimax method.

Moroccan immigrant youth. Nevertheless, a picture emerges that recalls the diverse trajectories of integration into Italian society of people belonging to the two national groups and the different level of social legitimation.

The mosaic composed by the Romanian youths interviewed appears to lead to a strong aspiration for social mobility and widespread meritocracy. In this sense, social commitment and study appear like the nodes and instruments for giving concrete form to a similar aspiration. An aspiration followed by a group of factors (solidarity, love and freedom) that is consistent with the first component, probably connected to the perception of a yet to be completed integration and acceptance in Italian society. The third component hinges on sporting activities, success and recreation, and could translate a sharing of some hedonistic models conveyed by the integration of the Romanian youths interviewed. Only the fourth component (not reported above) sees the presence of religion associated to the family: as observed, among Romanian youth belonging to different types of religions prevails, but on the other hand there is a greater articulation of these latter compared to Moroccan youth. The fact that, in other words, religion is not identified among the first three components is consistent with its lower centrality when referred to the interviewees as a whole.

With respect to Moroccan youth, once again, religion (associated with the family) does not fall within the first three components for them. Its position as a fifth component is not easy to interpret. At the current state, two hypotheses can be formulated. The first characterizes religion as a sort of identification diffused among the Moroccan youth interviewed (as demonstrated also by the percentages of those who declared to be *believers*) and an effect of "social desirability" on the answers given in the questionnaire. The analysis of the main components, in this sense, seems to lead to further examination of the professed belonging (also due to the reduced number of *spirituals*). Instead, the second hypothesis identifies religion as a common denominator such as to present a widespread association that is only partly supported by the association with the family (in the fifth component). Once again this case requires further examination that does not limit itself to the generic declaration of belonging (for the vast majority of Moroccan youths interviewed, to *believers*) but systematically extends itself to those relationships that, under an apparent unanimity, nevertheless produce significant differentiations.

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Chapter 12
Everyday Research Implications of Catholic Theological Positions: An American Perspective

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Beginning with the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (*Gaudium et Spes*) of the Second Vatican Council, Catholic social doctrine has been describing itself as open to the various social sciences and as ready to learn from them. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* locates this learning from the social sciences within the very process of the development of doctrine. Such expressions of openness confirmed what had become a fact in some influential circles of the American Catholic Church for some time. Pope Leo XIII's endorsement of Thomistic thought, a system that was in contrast to the Platonic tradition of philosophy and highlighted the importance of factual information, laid the groundwork. For example, social science departments were founded early on in the history of the Catholic University of America, an institution directly sponsored by the American Catholic bishops.

A key figure in Catholic University's early history was William J. Kerby, a priest who had been sent to Europe to study sociology and enrolled in courses in Berlin given by the economist Gustav Schmoller and the sociologist Georg Simmel, before earning a Ph.D. in political science at Louvain. Simmel had a particularly strong influence on Kerby's own work. Kerby not only assumed responsibility for a sociology program at Catholic University and recruited its faculty but also founded a school of social work. His sociological perspective was influential in the church publication he founded – the *American Ecclesiastical Review* – and the many retreats he conducted for the American clergy (see Blasi 2005).

Prior to Vatican II there was a cadre of intellectuals situated in an organic relationship with the American working class.[1] Most of the Catholic population consisted of members of that class, and the more intellectually inclined of the clergy, especially the Irish Americans (whose first language was English, a fact that gave them an

[1] On the "organic intellectual," see Gramsci (1971: 5–23).

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educational advantage over other Catholic ethnic groups) identified with workers' issues. Kerby, John A. Ryan (Broderick 1963; Curran 1982: 26–91), Raymond W. Murray, CSC (Blasi and Donahoe 2002: 57–69), and Paul Hanly Furfey (Curran 1982: 135–71), among others, found the social encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* resources for legitimating their sometimes controversial progressive views. Consequently, Catholic social teaching found avid advocates in America, advocates who were influential in several ecclesiastical circles of the nation. The empirical side of this genuinely American Catholic tradition reached a zenith during the time of the second Vatican Council, when it became something of a fad for a diocese to have a sociologically trained "pastoral planner."

Much of this began to diminish in 1968, after Pope Paul VI reversed the conclusions of the Vatican commission he had established to study the birth control question. Pastoral planners, after all, took demography seriously. The hierarchy continued to formulate sincere statements amplifying and applying the social doctrines, and a significant percentage of clergy, religious and laity continued to take social issues seriously – indeed, it could be said that the Catholic lobbyists in Washington and in the state capitals were the most influential voices for workers rights, next to those of organized labor, and for the rights of the poor and marginalized in the country. Nevertheless, little has been heard of Catholic social doctrine in American Catholic schools and parishes.[2]

One of the factors in this change in climate has been the economic success of the American Catholic population. By the time of Vatican II, it was becoming very middle class. Its parochial schools enabled many American Catholics to enter the ranks of the professions. This development paralleled what was happening in the wider American population, which had been becoming increasingly an educated one. Intellectuals once worked their way through college; enrolling in graduate programs meant living in poverty for a time, surviving off of meager grants, and sharing space with the down and out. People still work their way through colleges, but the "colleges" are now more often than not community colleges and public branch campus universities whose degrees confer less status and security. The intelligentsia does not come from the ranks of these erstwhile students but rather are the sons and daughters of yesterday's intellectuals. They come from suburban high schools and attend elite institutions of higher education. They are less political and more conventional than their parents, and they do not lead a bohemian existence during graduate school. Consequently we have a new generation of "conservative" intellectuals, rugged individuals who have never had to rough it, who exert their energies revising the analyses written in the past. And such are as common among Catholic intellectuals as any other part of the American population. Indeed, those who do come from the proletarian strata under such circumstances may be tempted more to over-conform to the new elite than to identify with low-status ethnic groups. Any Catholic intellectuals in an organic relationship with the working class are likely to

[2]Whether the newly established *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* represents a revival remains to be seen.

be the offspring of immigrants from Latin America, which appears to be the case, for example, with Joseph Palacios (2007).

What this suggests is that there are not many "organic intellectuals" ready to give cultural expression to the worldview of the disinherited. Rather, the Church's professional social thinkers need to pose fairly specific questions and recruit specialists to answer them. In short, *the institutional Church needs to promote a research agenda*. That can be politically difficult since the point of empirical research is to discover whether arguments that have or might have been used in advancing a church teaching turn out to be true, not to prove them true. Andrew Greeley observes that this distinction is lost on many priests and bishops; he summarizes the belief of these as follows: "There is no possible distinction between fact and value. Thus, it is the obligation of the scholar to report the way reality should be (which is the way the Pope and the bishops say it should be) and not the way it is" (1989: 393). The late Joseph H. Fichter, SJ, noted that many religious officials, whom he termed "religionists," unwittingly engaged in a secularizing compartmentalizing of religion from everyday life in their arguments against objective social scientific inquiry into religious life: "At the same time the religionists, especially some of the full-time functionaries of religion, tend to fence off the religious role as a sort of sacred property. It must not be submitted to the scrutiny of the social psychologist, the sociologist, or the cultural anthropologist" (1954: 4).

Research Concerning Family Issues

The family as an institution has taken any number of forms, all of them cultural constructs at least to some extent. The only cross-cultural constant seems to be, at least for ordinary people, that there is an incest taboo: it is contrary to the social norms to marry or have sexual relations with one's parents, siblings or children. The reference to "ordinary people" is simply a qualification necessitated by the occasional practice in a few monarchies for siblings to marry for dynastic reasons. One might also note an exception from Sumerian society, of which there is a shadow in the patriarchal legends in the Hebrew scriptures, whereby a patriarch would adopt a daughter-in-law in order to guarantee inheritances, in a manner analogous to monarchs' dynastic concerns. Now Church teaching maintains that indissoluble monogamous marriage of a man with a woman is "natural." This claim appears to require some basic research.

First, it is necessary to explain exactly what is meant by "natural." What are the criteria by which natural phenomena can be distinguished from unnatural? It would not appear to be the case that "natural" simply means "from nature," since all manner of human behavior is prompted by nature-based impulses. One might regard the clear separation of roles as fundamental to a natural order within the family; this would be consistent with the incest taboo. Thus, the political construct of sibling marriage in the Ptolemaic dynasty would be deemed unnatural. Empirical research could look for harmful consequences of inter-role conflict in

families in order to ascertain whether they are less present in monogamous than polygamous families.

The indissoluble monogamous marriage of a man and woman is said to symbolize and make present God's eternal covenant with humanity. How well does it really do this? Is there a way to measure this symbolization? Can there be a making of the covenant present apart from an adequate symbolization? Do all alternative forms of family really fail to symbolize, and hence make the covenant present in some way? Need every dysfunctional monogamous marriage of a man and a woman be maintained and every functional alternative be discouraged? What are the consequences for the partners and for children of maintaining the dysfunctional and discouraging the functional? Many pastors allow for alternatives quietly – *i.e.* without openly "causing scandal" – on the basis of what they know intuitively. But shouldn't something be said for institutional honesty? Could there be measurable contributions to well-being from highlighting the more subtle phenomenon of the functionality of a family, or does the making present of God's covenant with humanity take the form of a legal system that is found in few if any legal orders of the modern world?

There is sociological research that suggests marital stability correlates with a number of desired outcomes in the socialization of children. That does not answer the question, however, whether the detrimental effects on children come from divorce or from the defective relationships in the family that lead up to divorce. Research needs to go beyond merely comparing the well-being of children from intact and non-intact families to focusing on the quality of life within families. Then there are the alternatives: Are there really detrimental consequences of same-sex unions where children are adopted? There is little by way of empirical research that suggests there is – much assertion, but little by way of research. Quality-of-life research also needs to be conducted on various kinds of polygynous marriage; there are too few cases of polyandrous marriage to establish much of an empirical baseline for that type. Let's hypothesize, for example, that polygyny tends toward greater stability than monogamy; do any advantages that arise from that greater stability outweigh any disadvantages that arise from conflict among wives? Is the quality of husband-wife relationships impaired by the polygynous situation? These are empirical questions that require research. Those pertaining to polygyny are especially germane to some Christian missions, but also European and North American immigrant situations.

Catholic social teaching maintains that the legalization of divorce and of same-sex unions detracts from the respect accorded in a society to the monogamous marriage of a man and a woman. This is an argument that needs to be tested with empirical research. First, it is necessary to find a way of measuring the respect accorded to traditional monogamous marriage. A simple recitation of divorce statistics will not do, since the argument will then be a tautology: Divorce is an indicator of divorce. Straightforward questionnaire items asking how important marriage is would also fail to yield useful data; respect is not a verbal pattern but a behavioral one. The needed research may well begin by presenting subjects with video depictions of strained family situations and asking the subjects for their comments.

Human Work

The *Compendium* notes that Jesus was a man of work. References to him in the Christian scriptures as coming from the household of an architect or builder suggest that this is true enough.[3] In the earliest work of Christian literature, Paul of Tarsus wrote as one who worked so as not to be a burden on anyone (1 Thess 2:9). But what is the image of Jesus that is actually communicated to Christians by their churches? On one extreme the earthly Jesus can be lost in the imagery of the Pantocrator, while on the other such earthly images as the Crucified and the Good Shepherd miss the theme of work altogether. The poverty of Jesus receives due attention during the Christmas season, if only by way of a protest against the commercialization of the feast, but what image is present in prayerful inspiration? What image of Christian ministry does the clerical status reflect? These are empirical questions that lend themselves to scientific inquiry. On the one hand, one might sample religious literature, homiletic texts, and works of religious art. On the other hand, one might sample believers and elicit their images of Jesus and clergy.

The whole issue of the subjective dimension of work, which is to have priority over the objective, begs for inquiry. Which occupations occasion a degree of self-actualization and which do not? Which occasion more and which less? Does technology enhance and detract from it? Do large corporate structures enhance self-determination and small businesses detract from it, or vice-versa? If there is a difference at all, how significant is it? Is autonomy on the rise or in decline? Answering such questions requires good indicators of subsidiarity and autonomy, and good measures of work-related self-actualization. They also require a circumspect analysis of routine – whether it creates opportunities for reflection by economizing on energy or whether it ties the worker to a non-human humdrum tempo.

The phenomenon of consumerism on one end of economic activity needs to be evaluated in terms of its consequences on the nature of productive work on the other. Academic workers encounter the relationship when they are "evaluated" in terms of consumer responses rather than in terms of the intrinsic value of their studies and teaching. Such institutions as community colleges that rely heavily on contingent faculty are known to take the results of student opinionaire "evaluations" seriously; the result is that contingent faculty often avoid teaching difficult material, lest it challenge the students. Education bureaucrats study "outcomes" in terms of multiple-choice tests (usually consisting of multiple stimuli, each arbitrarily accorded a weight equal to the others and treated as if they comprised a scale, all of them focusing on particulate fragments of discourse that need to be recalled – with or without understanding). Even elite colleges and universities, under financial (*i.e.* market) pressure to maintain or even raise enrollments (the "body count"), have been known to fall into this syndrome. Grades, of course, must be generous, if not meaningful.

[3] Magnani (2001: 235–38) offers a good summary of the relevant scholarly literature.

Aside from instruction, "professional activity" (usually research) needs to be particalized into the most numerous grants, reports, and publications possible, irrespective of whether or not the total comprises a real achievement. Some universities establish something of a hall-of-fame-like million-dollar list to commemorate and celebrate grant-getters who bring home the precious "overhead cut" to the institution. Apart from the attack upon high civilization that is represented by this top-ten playlist approach to instruction and used-car sales approach to professional activity, there is the issue of the impact wrought upon the subjective side of academic work. Professors become "instructors." They are not to become too inspired by their subject since that may inadvertently occasion insight, which is too challenging to students and too difficult to forecast in a grant proposal. They focus on pedagogical methodology for making impressions in the memories of students rather than challenge them to enter into discursive thinking. Lecturing is discouraged lest students be required to become proficient listeners, and reading is made optional for similar reasons. In research, ideas and theoretical frameworks can be dispensed with altogether since they require too much expertise to be relegated to a research assistant. Keywords that lend themselves to being indexed and tables of "findings" are all that are necessary. The activity loses its intrinsic meaning, hence is alienated from the subjective workings of the individual. The professor/professional is about as involved in the core of the specialty in question as is a commodities futures trader in farming, ranching or mining.

How widespread is this kind of alienation? One thinks of artists who paint a tree, shore, or sunset over and over again as canvasses go by in an assembly line so that furniture stores can be well stocked with "art." On reads about politicians who decide not to run for re-election out of frustration over having to spend most of their time raising campaign funds. One sees carpenters busily constructing spacious houses that most people, and certainly not they, could never afford to live in. It would be very difficult to conduct research on the problem, since the very questions one would ask workers would raise issues in their minds to which their employers would object and that the workers themselves may try to avoid diligently. It would require informal observational research, much in the manner of the "slow journalism" version of sociology. The resultant monographs would be easily attacked for not being "objective." Few sponsors or funding agencies of such work would tolerate the resultant controversy.

There is another aspect to work alienation that is quite relevant to religion but rarely considered by religionists. Simple observation at Sunday services reveals a tendency in working-class congregations and parishes to dress "up" and in upper middle-class ones to dress "down." Both populations are trending away from their work-place attire. There is an actual sense that faith and family should stand in contrast to what goes on in the workplace. Whatever the circumstances may be at work, people sense that they dominate too much of life. People want to demarcate the sacred symbolically from the occupational. They want to compartmentalize. The churches can simply accommodate this situation by providing a weekly escape, but they might also cultivate more intentionally an analysis of our various life circumstances.

Economic Life

Catholic social thought applies a different yardstick to economic arrangements than does classical economic theory. There is a concern for the dignity of the individual rather than the maximization of gain and minimization of loss, and there is a concern for the common good, which is not quite the same thing as gross domestic product since it concerns the distributive aspect of the domestic product. Our present focus is on the research agenda that would follow from the approaches of Catholic social thought.

Beginning at the micro level, one would want to know how much of an income would be necessary for respectable survival in a community, whether a reasonable workweek is obtainable, and if obtainable, whether it provides the requisite level of income. At the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century a research tradition began that focused on such issues; the general program of research thrived in the "sociology caucus" in the American Economic Association that in 1906 became what is now the American Sociological Association. Part of that kind of research tradition continues in the federal government in the form of the calculation of the poverty line. But income is only one of the relevant variables. There are also such factors as the availability of employment, the amount of time required for gainful employment, and the number of individuals who need to hold full-time employment to support a household. The relevant inquiries do not end there, however. It may be necessary to raise the minimum wage in order for one full-time employee to support a family, and some would maintain that raising the cost of labor for employers leads to a reduction in the availability of employment in general. If a minimum wage that is set high enough to be a living wage has such an effect, some other method needs be found to produce more employment opportunities. For example, allowing tax deductions from business income for labor-saving devices – whether under the form of investment credits or depreciation over time – needs to be re-evaluated. If a business could deduct only the actual cost of labor and then have to contribute to a payroll tax for social security as well, while it would be able to obtain a full tax credit for investing in machinery, the tax code would make it artificially more profitable to replace people with technology. It is one thing for technology to be adopted where it is genuinely more efficient and effective, but it is quite another matter to promote it with contrived advantages. A relevant line of research would focus on the impact of such legal contrivances on employment opportunities.

Similarly, there is the current question of medical insurance in the United States. As an unintended outcome of wage and price controls during World War II, health insurance came to be a job-related "fringe benefit" in the United States; corporations sought to hold onto employees during the war by offering such benefits in the absence of being able to raise wages. Consequently we have today a society stratified by health coverage. Some occupations typically enjoy health coverage and some do not. Employers whose workers have access to family medical coverage end up indirectly subsidizing the (sometimes part-time) labor of members of the employees' families who work at jobs that do not come with medical coverage. This and

various other forms of cost shifting render the labor market less efficient – a concern from the perspective of classical economics; but they also threaten the viability of the medical coverage arrangements as a whole. Moreover, alternative plans paid out of taxes are devised for the retired and the poor. Obviously the market mechanism is operating for only a minority of the national population in the United States, if it can be thought to be operating at all. Politically, it seems that only the troublesome prospect of public funds being used for abortion has prevented the advent of socialized medicine or at least public medical insurance in America – something thought through by Richard M. Nixon and his major campaign contributor, the insurance magnet W. Clement Stone. It is not an accident but a simple political phenomenon that our public medical insurance is generally aimed at retirees.

Before going further toward macro issues, there is also the question of being "poor in spirit" or, in more contemporary terms, of not being swept into consumerism. What is the impact on the individual's work ethic if one is not particularly enticed by earning the greatest sum of money possible? The famous sociologist, economist, legal scholar, and politician Max Weber observed that immigrant farm workers in the east of Germany worked only enough to support their traditional standard of living, so that giving them a raise simply led them to work less. He may well have been accurate in his observations, but it was also a matter of people leaving their homes and communities and taking up a migratory existence. One may well want to quit as soon as possible under such circumstances. Whether people who are "poor in spirit" work more than others or less, and whether they are better workers or poorer ones than others, are empirical questions; one can think of good rationales for all four possibilities. Provided that one can measure spiritual poverty, research on the matter would be interesting.

Turning to macro issues, it becomes necessary to conceptualize the "common good" more thoroughly. Adam Smith believed that capitalism, not fettered and frustrated by government, promotes the common good. Capitalism as he conceived it entailed price competition. Total or near monopolies would be opposed to capitalism of that kind. Moreover, assets would be plowed back into productive purposes, not squandered in the conspicuously unproductive showmanship about which Thorstein Veblen would later warn us. Consequently, maintaining Smithian capitalism requires anti-monopoly initiatives on the part of government and taxation schedules that can potentially divert idle capital into the market during downward portions of the business cycle. Through much of the twentieth century, governments were appending weights and mechanisms to the capitalist system in order to maintain its balance. Moreover, some sectors of society might not be sufficiently integrated into economic activity and thereby hold down the level of economic activity needed for the common good; consequently racial and ethnic equity became an economic issue as well. One is reminded of the complex celestial system of epicycles used to explain the retrograde motion of the planets in the sky that Copernicus confronted. The common good comes to mean everything – race relations, breaking up monopolies, setting interest rates, taxation, and more.

One wonders whether analysis is enhanced by placing such divergent issues into the one category, "common good." For research purposes, one may well need a

schedule of more specific principles as bases for a research agenda and leave the principle of the common good for matters that fall rightly outside the scope of private enterprise. The profit motive is not very functional in medicine, education, disaster response, and national defense. One can make a case that it is only marginally functional in transport and pensions. These would seem to be the relevant arena of the common good, and an appropriate research paradigm would measure it as such. If some people are afflicted by a communicable disease, all are in danger. If an inadequately educated employee or official botches an important work, all are endangered. Gross domestic product and a poverty line do not capture what is at issue in the common good. A calculus of "what if" outcomes needs to be developed.

The Political Community

The principle of subsidiarity alone suggests an extensive research agenda. In social scientific circles the relevant studies are indexed under the term *federalism*, although subsidiarity and federalism are not exactly the same thing. Subsidiarity as a principle would accord as a matter of entitlement the smaller units contained within a larger one jurisdiction over what they can do well on their own. That entitlement may be proper to a local level of government (as would be implied in federalism) or to a free-standing entity such as a family or business (where it would be a matter of limited government). The former raises issues of the distribution of powers: those powers residing in the higher level of government, those concurrent in two or more levels, those where cooperation occurs in two or more levels, and those residing exclusively in one or more lower levels of government. In the United States, the power to print or coin money resides solely in the national government, and that is for the common good since implementing orderly economic policies would be made inefficient by the multiplication of currencies. A concurrent power in the U.S. is that of levying taxes, while a cooperative one would be higher education, where the states establish universities and the federal government provides the bulk of student loans. Most police powers and the administration of primary and secondary schools and of welfare agencies is "reserved" to the states and the local corporations they establish. That is certainly not the only way to do things; smaller nations can easily operate in a more centralized manner. In Canada the criminal code is largely set by the national government, though the provinces enforce most of the laws. The empirical question is under what circumstances does a pattern of delegated, concurrent, cooperative, and reserved powers work for justice and when does it not? The American experience has found that national powers need to be expanded to overcome the effects of local prejudices; that was accomplished in the twentieth century with respect to race relations not only by the enactment and enforcement of the civil rights and voting laws but also by linking the power of the purse (under the form of the federal income tax coupled to "grants in aid to the states") to the states' and their agencies' compliance with federal policies. Here the expansion of national authority and individual rights worked together against state and local prerogatives.

How much is the common good promoted when one level of government becomes the protector of individual rights against their violation by another level? Under what conditions do the lower levels of government protect rights against their infringement by higher levels of government? A comparison with Canada is instructive: The fact that one province is predominantly French-speaking is essential to the political dynamics involved in protecting the cultural rights of the Francophones throughout the country. A similar dynamic is developing in the United States right now, where a significant Latino electorate participates in the politics of some states – most notably California – and may guarantee cultural rights in the future. Such dynamics are not limited to language and ethnic issues; the economic interests of farmers and organized labor commonly arise in different states. Note that the relevant political dynamics are not matters of constitutional structures of delegated, concurrent, cooperative, and reserved functions but rather the existence of different political jurisdictions from which interest groups can insert their issues into a national debate. The localized interest groups can be accommodated in the national legislative processes.

The question of limited government often arises in matters such as free speech, freedom of assembly, and family prerogatives over education. Here there are "trade-offs." Free speech is for the common good not only because individuals have rights but also because government subject to inquiry and criticism will be better government. Tyrannies are sometimes established when the citizenry is passive and incompetent, but in the long term tyrannies tend to become inoperative in matters of the common good and incompetent in general. One might hypothesize that this is so for the operation of universities: passive faculties may allow their senates to be co-opted or to become merely honorary shams, with the result that the administrations operate without scrutiny in a corrupt and incompetent manner. Some comparative study across a number of institutions of higher education may reveal whether the hypothesis is proved true. On the other hand, free speech is also the occasion of unchecked misinformation and pornography. In the American experience the courts have favored freedom more than the prevention of false claims and pornography, but such prevention is not altogether lacking. While political and artistic expressions tend to be protected absolutely, business expression can be limited for purposes of the common good. Freedom of assembly is similarly necessary for limiting government. Critics must be able to organize, yet that freedom has never justified conspiracies simply to perpetrate crimes. Families have the freedom to opt for private schools for their children, but in the U.S. the states can set standards that apply to all schools – public and private. A lack of standards in education can work against the common good if the private schools neglect those parts of the curriculum deemed necessary for the welfare of the students and necessary for their successful participation in the wider society. Empirical study is needed to determine whether "home schooling" and all kinds of "charter schools" really cover all that is necessary – not only in terms of subject matter but also, and perhaps more important, in such curriculum dimensions as objectivity and ability to understand, appreciate and evaluate multiple viewpoints. In the general area of education, a line of research might determine a minimal cognitive standard, comparable to the poverty level in the economic

realm, under which educational supplements might be supplied. Such a standard would have to be much more sophisticated than the batteries of tests used at the present time.

Beyond government, though not beyond its responsibility, there is the question of whether large corporations work for the common good. Historically, this has arisen in questions of economic market monopolies and oligopolies. Research might go beyond the issue of competition: at what size do the firms in a given business sector cease treating their customers and employees reasonably? Firms that are very small may well mistreat their employees. It is not a matter of bigness always being a negative feature. A modicum of impersonality allows a comfortable degree of freedom, both in the activity of the employee and of the customer. But large scale bureaucratic routines that work only "in the main" have victims. Research can establish the kinds and degrees of such victimization and the scale of organization with which they are associated.

Might the advantages of pluralism and relative autonomy work for the common good in the Church? It has been frequently noted that the principle of subsidiarity needs to be applied to Church governance and that the principle seems to exist in a tension with both the monarchical form of organization and, since the mid-nineteenth century, with the centralizing tendencies of the Vatican curia. In the affair over pedophilia and its cover-up, for example, the absence of effective individual rights in the Church led to victims having to resort to the civil courts to seek redress of their grievances. What is missing in the Church is a lay-run governance sector – *i.e.*, one not answerable to the ordinaries who have proved to be too passive with respect to the common good and insufficiently competent in dealing with the problem. The issue has been pressed by the secular guarantees of free speech (exercised in independent Catholic publications, especially the *National Catholic Reporter*, and in the secular newspapers), by resort to the secular courts. Experiments with the empowerment of lay bodies merit scientific attention. It would be particularly interesting to study any parish councils that are genuinely autonomous. Palacios (2007: 133ff.) notes that freedom to pursue issues of justice in Mexico depended on something of a semi-autonomous Catholic movement parallel to the domain led by the hierarchy.

Social Doctrine and Ecclesial Action

What is the impact of Church teaching on people's approaches to various matters? The relevant research questions include the extent to which the Church teachings are actually presented to church members and, if presented, what impact they might have. There is a real question about whether the official teachings are mere documents or whether they serve as the basis for intentional preaching and teaching. The research interest can extend beyond teachings per se and encompass the impressions made by ecclesiastical practices. For example, subsidiarity was largely respected in the Church prior to the Council of Trent. After that Council considerable

uniformity came to be imposed on church life in general, culminating in 1917 with a codification of canon law. The 1917 Code, as well as the 1983 Code that replaced it, substituted a centralized and uniform governance that did not exist throughout most of the Church's history. It was even forbidden to translate the 1917 Code from Latin, lest plural understandings of it arise. Moreover a commission was established to articulate "authentic" interpretations. The question for empirical research is, "What impact does this have on everyday Church life?" Do people fail to participate fully in Church life because they apprehend it as a distant and alien matter on account of the high degree of centralization and uniformity obtaining in distant Vatican commissions?

Concerning church teachings, there is this case in point: I have before me an issue of the official newspaper of the diocese in which I live. The front page has a photograph of part of an ordination ceremony, the beginning of an article about my state's execution of a death sentence, and a box referring the reader to a story about new clergy assignments on an inside page. Prominence is clearly given to the Church's teaching against the death penalty. One could be encouraged by the attention given to such a teaching, but it is also true that far more lives are at stake in the prosecution of a war in Iraq by the federal government and that the loss of lives is in the absence of provocation, while in the case of the death penalty guilty rather than innocent life is taken. The paper says nothing about the war, and indeed on page 2 a photograph is shown of the bishop blessing a veterans' memorial in the cathedral, and a caption reporting the words engraved in the memorial: "In defense of freedom, a gift from God." Undoubtedly veterans gave their lives in defense of freedom in a just war, but the timing of the dedication is suggestive of an endorsement of a contemporary unjust war that had "weapons of mass destruction" as a pretext for stationing armed forces over the world's richest oil field. It is over half a century since our armed forces fought genuinely in defense of liberty in a war that meets the "just war" criteria. Another full page is devoted to the death penalty, and two small articles report anti-abortion and pro-family activities outside the diocese. Two full pages cover more anti-abortion, anti-euthanasia and (embryonic) anti-stem cell stories. Further into the issue another story describes a small class in a parish that focuses on social justice teachings. Then comes an extended story about school children sending letters of encouragement to soldiers in Iraq. The editorial page calls for respectful immigration reform and putting people before profits in the provision of health care. But there is another editorial column that emphasizes Americans' indebtedness to military service personnel, including those serving in Iraq.

The questions for research are, "How much treatment do the various social teachings receive in the Catholic press, the Sunday homilies, and the curricula in Catholic schools?" "How much spirituality is cultivated on such themes as peace, regard for the neighbor, and simplicity in living in catechetical programs such as the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults?" "Is the treatment of social doctrines in the Catholic press in general as mixed as in the newspaper of my diocese?" "What actually is taught as religion in the Catholic schools?" I have heard forthright homilies on peace and immigrant rights, and even on justice, but then I make a point of attending a church where I can expect to hear that now and then. What is the usual fare in

Sunday homilies? I know my own annual session on social justice in a local R.C.I.A. program was routinely canceled for such special events as a bishop's visit or pastor's question-and-answer session. The environmental issue seems to be neglected entirely.

The second general research issue is what impact church teaching has when it does occur. This can be considered both in terms of the effectiveness of the message and of the medium. When the Catholic bishops of the United States issued *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* in May 1983, there was a significant response. There may or may not have been a notable alteration in poll indicators of anti-militarist sentiment, but individuals did resign from war-industry jobs, and the Catholic peace movement took on new life. There may well be great potential if other teachings were promoted as strikingly – e.g., on environmentalism. Cardinal Mahoney and others may well have changed minds and moved hearts in the debate over U.S. immigration policy. The question is not how *many* minds and hearts. The number of them is as much a matter of the medium employed as the message. The question is that of the potential residing in the message itself. Focus group research may be able to explore the matter. One could explore the responsiveness, for example, to life issues versus contraception as an issue, or whether there is a responsiveness to medical justice issues versus euthanasia as an issue. It is not that teachings that do not "sell" should be abandoned, but that energy and resources should not be diverted so much from those that do "sell" that the latter would be neglected. To a great extent it is a "zero sum" situation. What is not used effectively is lost.

As for the teachings that can be communicated with considerable success, research is needed to explore how best to communicate them. Personally, I suspect that demonstrations and press releases do not work well with life issues. People who are not sensitized to life at a tender age will not be moved by even a homily on abortion or a newspaper editorial about war. The parochial and religiously-sponsored high school may be the best instrument for sensitizing people to life. Children's sensitivity is capable of being heightened by such experiences as helping with the severely retarded and visiting the elderly. Appropriate attitudes can be cultivated and expanded to include new centers of attention – all in an intellectually honest manner. Once a person learns that one finds the greatest joy in the happiness of the *other* and comes to feel that there is no benefit in denigrating and distancing oneself from others, the psychological basis of insensitivity toward the afflicted, unborn, undeveloped, foreign, or simply different is undermined. The psychological basis of "choice" and militarism – as well as, I should add, such hostile forms of "pro life" activism as bombing abortion clinics and demonstrating at military funerals – is insensitivity. Sensitization is better accomplished in the school than amidst the heated rhetoric of the culture wars. Moreover, the entire plausibility of political activism on behalf of the pro-life position on abortion has been entirely undermined by its *de facto* alliance with militarism and with an indifference toward workers' rights, poverty, women's rights and immigrants' rights. Again, all this is what I personally suspect to be the case. Empirical research is needed to see whether these hypotheses are true.

One difficulty in the presentation of Church teachings in general arises in the civilizational-level cultural shift in epistemology. In the nineteenth century, the general tendency, especially in Catholic theology, was to believe that words corresponded to fixed eternal truths. More emphasis was placed on the signified than the signifying. Thus Romans 13:2, "Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment," was interpreted by Pope Gregory XVI to refer to all government, even the nineteenth-century Russian oppression in Poland. Today people are far more aware of the circumstances presupposed in the creation of discourse. Saint Paul would be understood to be responding to something happening in the Roman churches to whom he was writing (Hégy 2006: especially 48ff.). If statements of Church doctrine replicate the nineteenth-century pattern, they will be more likely dismissed out of hand as insufficiently nuanced. There is a need to ascertain where in Church teaching this is a problem. It would also be useful to know which sectors of the population are more and which less influenced by this epistemological change.

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Chapter 13
From Institution to Spirituality and Back: Or, Why We Should Be Cautious About the "Spiritual Turn" in the Sociology of Religion

Isacco Turina

My bishop could care less if my parishioners here worshipped goats.

– A Catholic priest in Northern Italy[1]

In the course of the past two decades or so, sociologists of religion have paid growing attention to what has been termed "spirituality" (Wuthnow 2001). Presently, a dichotomy between spirituality and religion began to appear in the literature. This new awareness seems to have stemmed, at least in part, from the grassroots – the actors themselves, in words and deeds, overtly or implicitly revealed a gap between religion as a fixed, tight and institutionally controlled system of belief and practice on one side, and a looser, much more creative, open and individual way of believing and practicing, on the other (McGuire 2008). This "spiritual turn" is therefore also a sign of a wave of democracy sweeping through the study of religion, and scholars increasingly feel the duty of taking into account the micro-level of religious commitment at any degree and in any form it may appear. Evidence of any kind of personal, discontinuous, syncretistic or even bizarre belief or practice has now full citizenship in our books and articles. These phenomena are frowned upon, dismissed or judged worthless no more.

In this chapter, I would like to highlight some limits and risks of the spiritual turn. Basically, my argument is that, while sociology of religion is becoming more democratic in character, some religious organizations may, in fact, be going in the opposite direction. If that is the case, then we should take care that our endorsement of spirituality does not lead us to forget the other, much less pleasant dynamic of social life – that of power.

[1]Reported by Marco Marzano, personal communication. The original is more vivid: "Se i miei parrocchiani qui adorassero le capre, al mio vescovo non gliene potrebbe fregare di meno."

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Inasmuch as I analyze the case of Roman Catholicism, all my observations and arguments may not necessarily apply to other religious cultures. Some of these arguments, however, are certainly valid in other contexts as well.

Spirituality and Catholic Virtuosity

To begin, I will return briefly to my past research on topics of spirituality. Hermits and consecrated virgins are, as one can guess, not very numerous; therefore, my subject matter was, statistically speaking, quite marginal. They are virtuoso examples of religiosity. They receive institutional consecration, usually by a bishop, but nonetheless carry out their religious life individually. Hermits and virgins are not placed under the supervision of a superior, nor are they bound to a collective rule, a preestablished lifestyle, work, dwelling, habit and so on. A rare case of "institutional spirituality" or of "liberalization of religious life," these people invite us to blur the boundaries between spirituality and religion, individual leeway and undivided belonging.

Indeed, hermits and virgins bring relevant elements of individualism into the traditional frame of religious life. The Catholic Church renounces direct control over them in favor of self-control. Young and sometimes pretty women make a pledge of lifelong virginity, ratified by a bishop in the course of a public ceremony, and then are free to pursue their calling in the world, living alone, holding a secular job, without showing any external sign of consecration (Turina 2011). This is surely something that the Catholic hierarchy would not have permitted before the Second Vatican Council.[2]

The hermits (many of those I interviewed were women too), or individual monks, devise their personal set of rules and submit them to the bishop for approval. Sometimes they shun official recognition and live their religious life with only loose and informal contacts with the diocese. They often agree to receive people for spiritual dialogue or advice. They create a network of friends and occasional helpers, based on a common spiritual friendship. Therefore, they are able to survive on this network without institutional support (Turina 2005).

The study of these new virtuosi has an exemplary, not a statistical, relevance. They reveal some of the many innovative, unexpected and open ways of balancing strict religious commitment against individual leeway, and institutional requirements against personal demands. Many ancient religious orders have also undergone their organizational and spiritual *aggiornamento* (Wittberg 1997). We can conclude that even Catholic religious life, a bastion of institutional religion, displays today a good amount of "spiritual" characters.

This conclusion is corroborated by a wide range of statements by the monks, nuns, hermits and virgins themselves. Many of them emphasize that institutional

[2]In 1950 the apostolic constitution *Sponsa Christi* by Pope Pius XII explicitly reserved this form of consecration for cloistered nuns.

dogmas cannot delegitimize the role of individual conscience. They claim the right to organize their own religious life in ways that are respectful of personal needs, habits and beliefs. A reasonable arrangement is often endorsed, sought and sometimes achieved between demands coming from above and options from below. Often, their opinions are at odds with what is preached by the hierarchy.

And yet, a shadow looms over the frame of this somehow comforting picture. Since they are out of the scope of hierarchy, these groups and individuals are also far from the center of power. Consecrated virgins, for example, are free to dress as they like and to spend their holidays wherever they wish. The Church recognizes and even endorses their individual freedom and self-control. However, where decisions are concerned, they are excluded from the process. The powerful Italian Conference of Bishops hardly pays attention to them, and none of the virgins holds a position of responsibility within the Church. The same can be said of hermits.

This comes as no surprise. In the title of a chapter on religious orders, Patricia Wittberg (2007) refers to them as "sacred periphery." Indeed, the choice of a contemplative or otherwise religious life has often implied renunciation of power. It is bishops, not monks, in the modern Roman Church who are typically committed to power.[3] Whereas on the periphery various and interesting forms of lived religion, witnessing of faith, evangelical service to the poor and the like can be observed, the game of power, almost by definition, is played elsewhere.

But this is of little wonder. We can now extend the view beyond the limited circle of virtuosi. In the rest of the chapter, I will focus on the relationship between Catholic organized minorities – made up by bishops and lay people alike – and the mass of ordinary believers, also constituted by consecrated and lay people.

The Decline of Parishes and the Role of Organized Minorities

I will begin with the Italian case. More than four fifths of the Italian population declare themselves to be Catholic. However, less than a fifth goes regularly to Mass. Many authors have reported and commented upon this striking incoherence, claiming that popular disaffiliation cannot but seriously damage the Church. But is that really so? Evidence seems to counter such an interpretation. Today, the Holy See and the Conference of Bishops wield growing power in Italy over the political domain and display a wide influence over the whole public sphere. A dramatic example was the referendum on *in vitro* fertilization held in June 2005. Its failure, due to a turnout of only 26% – the lowest in the history of the Italian Republic – was unanimously interpreted as a formidable success of the Church, which encouraged believers to abstain from voting. The outcome was likely the product of widespread indifference rather than hearty obedience. Nevertheless, it has been read as a sweeping victory of

[3]Of course some monks may become bishops, but this is much more frequent in the Orthodox world than in the modern Roman Church.

the Church, which has since increased its political influence (Romano 2005, ch. 10, Damilano 2006; Miccoli 2007, ch. 11, Pedrazzi 2006, ch. 1).

What is still awaiting an explanation is the strange fact that such a victory was obtained with only very limited popular support. The overall majority of Italian Catholics declares in polls that on ethical matters everyone has to follow his or her own conscience. Less than one-third of regularly practicing Catholics consider the ethical teaching of the Church as binding, and the datum for the Italian population at large is under 20%. Even more strikingly, 74% of the population is in favor of assisted fertilization, a position at odds with that of the Catholic hierarchy. Therefore, it seems that the Italian Church achieved a broad political victory on an issue on which three quarters of the Italian citizens did not agree with its position.

Reporting and commenting these data, Diamanti and Ceccarini (2007) define Catholics in Italy as an influential minority. The distance between the issue at stake and the common concerns of most people probably played a major role. The campaign for abstention was ruled upon by the Italian Conference of Bishops, which made only small efforts to educate ordinary parishioners on these issues. The strategy of abstention was mandated from above and then imposed over the vast universe of Catholic individuals, families and associations. Indifference, more than overt dissent, seems to have been their reaction. Indeed, only strongly committed believers follow sexual and ethical teachings, thereby distancing themselves from "mild" Catholics and starting, as we shall see later, an internal process of sect-formation. In the instance of the referendum, the Catholic hierarchy gained complete control over Catholic organizations that is reminiscent of pre-Council decades, before the grassroots movements of the 1960s and 1970s:

> The church was supported, and to a certain degree, instigated, by a number of conservative secular milieux, in search of "certain" points of reference with which to oppose the ethical relativism of western civilization. Moreover, in contrast with the past, it has obtained the support of nearly all the associations in the Catholic universe, including those (such as the ACLI) that had taken independent stands and even critical views of the church hierarchy on other matters (both social and political) in previous periods. (Diamanti and Ceccarini 2007: 52)

Consequently, there appears to exist an increasing distance between the concerns of the hierarchy and those of ordinary believers, but one which does not erode the former's political power.

It is now time to try to explain the apparent incoherence between a powerful hierarchy and a growingly indifferent, or uncommitted, public of Catholics. My claim is that the spiritual and doctrinal freedom observable among most Catholics is not solely the outcome of their deliverance from institutional control. At a certain point in history, this movement from below was accompanied by a corresponding shift by the central authority which has, so to speak, "abandoned" the parishes.

Throughout the Counter-reformation, the power of the Church in Europe was based on territorial control, exercised through parishes and dioceses. Ensuring the actual participation of the whole community to the sacraments was the priest's main task. Sociologists of religion have identified the decline of the "parish civilization" in the post-war decades (Hervieu-Léger 1997). Notwithstanding this dynamic however, the Church's power seems not to have declined sharply.

Therefore, we should probably conclude that its influence on Western societies does not rely on territorial control or on high levels of church attendance anymore. The latter have only been a particular, historically determined means of exerting its influence, one among many possible configurations of ecclesiastical power. In the last decades, the whole structure appears to have changed: decreased levels of agreement with the official doctrine among believers, or the phenomenon known as "believing without belonging" (Davie 1994), do not seem to have weakened it. Adaptation to modernity resulted in a radical change in the organization of the Church. In developed countries, the Vatican relies more and more on powerful and loyal minorities (including the bishops) rather than on territorial-based control over large masses of people. Empty pews and a good amount of individualized beliefs do not necessarily impair the political power of the hierarchy. The grassroots movements of religiously inspired social protest of the 1960s and 1970s have increasingly been substituted in the public arena by loyal figures of doctors, scientists, jurists and politicians. This is true for the laity and the consecrated alike – hence the feeling of being abandoned by the hierarchy that even priests may experience, as the remark at the opening of this chapter well shows.

To understand these changes, we need a theory of religious representation in the globalized political order. The notion of "vicarious religion" by Grace Davie provides a first insight. She defines it as "religion performed by an active minority but on behalf of a much larger number, *who implicitly at least not only understand, but quite clearly approve of what the minority is doing*" (Davie 2007: 127; emphasis original). Actually, as we have seen, the majority might even disagree with Church teachings, as in the example of artificial contraception or IVF in Italy. Therefore, it is the different action (or inaction) of the two groups that we should take into account separately. We need more empirical research that considers the historical and organizational context of the formation of these influential minorities.

The organization that is known today as the Catholic Action dates to the end of the nineteenth century. Under the control of the hierarchy its task was the re-Christianization of a secularized liberal society. (Faggioli 2008). In the twentieth century, the history of these groups, made up of lay and consecrated people alike, was largely the history of Catholic movements, from Opus Dei to Communion and Liberation, from Sant'Egidio to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement (Abbruzzese 1989; Della Cava 1992; Melloni 2003; De Los Reyes and Rich 2005; Balas 2008; Csordas 2007; Marzano 2009). These organizations have largely supplanted the declining groups of virtuosi of the past, the religious orders, as the primary supporters of the Vatican policies.[4]

One could object that this is largely a Western trend, and that the landscape in developing countries is quite different. Admittedly, my observation is limited to Western Europe. But the minorities we are talking about are typically cosmopolitan.

[4]Of course, the loyalty of these movements is far from being assured once and for all. Relations with the Holy See are often difficult or ambiguous, as have been, in the past centuries, those of religious orders, such as the Jesuits, with the central authority. Further development of this important point must await a separate review.

They lobby at the international NGOs. They launch international programs and are rapidly expanding also into the Third World. Opus Dei, the Community of Sant'-Egidio, the Legionaries of Christ and the Neocatechumenal Way, as different as they may be – and they surely are! – are all, nevertheless, transnational groups: they develop international protocols for admitting candidates, and they provide uniform formation for their leaders. They are the carriers of genuinely global projects for expanding the influence of Catholic Church in the world and in most cases, are judged as loyal and reliable by the Holy See.

In Europe and North America alike, parishes may well experience a spiritual and participatory revival. But the life of local communities, lively as it can be, seems quite detached from the life and the concerns of the hierarchy – more aloof, probably, than ever before. Therefore, in order to understand fully the organizational basis of the contemporary Catholic Church, we need to consider its social context and account for historical changes. For centuries, the primary concern of Church authorities has been the doctrinal conformity of large masses of believers and their church attendance. That may not be the case anymore. If ordinary believers are freer to display individual forms of belief and practice (*i.e.* spirituality), it is also because the Hierarchy judges them less useful than in the past. Provided they do not defy the central authority and do not raise scandals, they are allowed a good amount of organizational and doctrinal leeway. The costs of regaining and securing the docility of the masses would be too high, and the hierarchy seems unwilling to take the risk.

Moreover, in the twentieth century, mass commitment has been a two-edged sword for highly centralized religious powers. Committed masses may easily turn to socialism, nationalism, social protest and so forth as the Catholic hierarchy learned all too well during the "ferment of the sixties" (Walsh 2006). What started as a genuinely Christian movement of large segments of Catholic people soon turned into a threat for the Roman *Curia*. Therefore, my hunch is that the hierarchy may well be more comfortable today with empty pews but loyal organized minorities, than it was in the 1960s and 1970s, when facing the dangers of a lively and engaged Catholic people. Catholicism is not going to become a religion of sects, but sectary groups within it will wield increasing influence. A new internal hierarchy is appearing, one that distinguishes first-class from second-class believers – both groups composed by lay and consecrated people – whereas the former, pre-Council order typically separated consecrated from lay people and gave authority to the former over the latter.

The split between "spiritual" masses and "religiously loyal" minorities goes hand in hand with the emphasis on issues of sexuality and bioethics in the teaching of the most recent popes. Whether this was Paul VI's aim or not, the encyclical *Humanae vitae* that in 1968 confirmed the ban on artificial contraception in the long run brought polarized attitudes among believers. Large families have since become the identity badge of some movements, as distinct from ordinary Catholics. About the Neocatechumenal Way in Spain, for example, Castilla (2008: 87) observes:

> Neocatechumenals do not practice birth control as it is intended in the secular society, but follow instead the commands of the Vatican and avoid using contraceptive devices. Within their communities, procreation is encouraged, and having many children ("all the children

that God wants") is considered a sign of being a good Christian. Therefore, it is not unusual to find couples with, on average, five or six children.[5]

Topics like euthanasia or IVF are highly technical and far from the everyday experience of most people (though admittedly less so today than they used to be). In the case of contraception, the strict rules demanded by Catholic doctrine are likely to be followed by highly committed minorities ready to run counter to the mainstream liberal culture. In any case, issues like stem cells cannot possibly give rise to a practice of spiritual guidance, which is the main interface between the institutional Church and the masses. On the media and in secular institutions alike, it is almost always clerical and intellectual elites – bishops, scientists, lawyers, theologians – that are called to represent the position of the Church on bioethics. Therefore, the emphasis on these topics is coherent with the attempt by the hierarchy in post-Council years to thwart reform movements like liberation theology (Hebblethwaite 1999; Pollard 2006). The Catholic movements of reform and dissent of the 1960s and 1970s, which focused on social and economic change, were in the following decades actively fought and curtailed by the hierarchy. Committed and loyal minorities are today the allies of the Vatican in its struggle against both liberal culture and groups of reform-minded, dissenting Catholics. To give priority to euthanasia and stem cell research over social reforms may therefore be a means of giving voice to diplomatic, clerical and intellectual elites, while at the same time silencing more democratic groups deemed dangerous for the central authority.[6]

Conclusion

On the basis of these observations, I believe that a sociological agenda for the study of Catholicism in the twenty-first century should focus on two issues:

On the empirical side, we should conduct a close study of organized minorities. In particular, attention should be paid to the influence they may have on powerful institutions: NGOs and other international organizations, like the UN and the EU; national forums such as parliaments, hospitals, schools and universities; and ecclesiastical institutions. Indeed, there exists a network of relationships between traditional structures – like parishes and monasteries – and Catholic movements. For example, it seems that in Italy – and maybe in Spain as well – they may be responsible for a large amount of the new monastic vocations.[7] Parishes, too, may become

[5] For an overview of the Neocatechumenal Way, see McDermott (2002).

[6] This does not mean that the Holy See has abandoned social doctrine. But, as Gene Burns states (2005), The standard for measuring loyalty to the Vatican today is only adherence to the teachings on sexuality and human life, whereas on matters of economics and social reform Catholics are freer to express their dissent (see also Calvez 1993). This is true of lay as well as of consecrated people: priests who overtly oppose the doctrine on contraception, homosexuality or euthanasia stand little chance – if any at all – of becoming bishops.

[7] Giovanni Dal Piaz, personal communication.

"movement friendly," when the priest belongs to a movement. In the long run, this can mould the local Christian community, the moment of crisis – or open conflict – being the arrival of a new priest. This is, as of yet, almost uncharted territory.

On the theoretical side, a new reflection on religious power is badly needed. Who wields the most power within the Roman Church? What are the priorities of evangelization? If, as seems likely, the hierarchy relies more on familiar transmission of faith rather than on conversions for the recruitment of new believers, then organized minorities might be more effective than parishes in carrying out this task.[8] And, if so, what is the relationship between moral concerns – and principally the family, sexual behavior, the defense of human life – and the exercise of power? Such issues are merely moral as long as they are only the subject of debate by theologians or confessors; once they become a major concern of the central authority, however, then the resulting discourse should be analyzed as a matter of power and of morals together.

I do not think that the case of Roman Catholicism can easily be generalized to other faiths. Indeed, it is likely to be highly peculiar. But we should not overlook the theoretical and empirical limits of the spiritual turn in the face of the global growth of fundamentalist movements (Almond et al. 2003; Davis and Robinson 2009), which seems to suggest an increasingly polarized religious landscape.[9] First, we run the risk of losing sight of the issues of power and organization, thereby losing most of the specificity afforded by the sociological point of view. Second, we may be led to think that religion has, on the whole, become more democratic than in the past. In light of the issues raised in this chapter, I fear that such a conclusion might be wishful thinking.

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[8] I am indebted to Patricia Wittberg for an interesting question that drew my attention to this crucial point.

[9] If this is the case, then the split in the sociology of religion between two main streams of research, one focusing on fundamentalism and the other on spirituality, may well be a reflection of the scientific field of the outside reality.

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